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EDITORIAL

THE RED AND THE BLACK

The key to understanding President Reagan's address in defense of the South African apartheid regime—for despite certain criticisms it was a statement of solidarity—is his belief that a rich piece is at stake in the superpower game of geopolitics. Again and again in his tendentious talk last week, Reagan invoked the Evil Empire as the real enemy in South Africa.

"What foreign power would fill the vacuum if its ties with the West are broken?" he asked. "If the rising hostility in southern Africa explodes, the Soviet Union will be the main beneficiary, and the critical ocean corridor of South Africa and the strategic minerals of the region would be at risk." As he sees it, the alternative to apartheid, "flawed" as it may be, is that "organization that proclaims a goal of creating a communist state, and uses terrorist tactics and violence to achieve it"—the "Soviet-armed guerrillas of the African National Congress operating both within South Africa and from some neighboring countries."

With such an analysis of the black struggle for freedom, Reagan is not likely to take any action that would significantly upset the balance of power in southern Africa, which is still precariously tipped in his favor. Sanctions are out of the question because they could begin the end of the Botha government and, ultimately, loosen the country's ties to the West.

What must worry Reagan most, however, is that inaction is no longer enough, that even without sanctions the balance is about to topple. At that point, Reagan will have few options for "engagement."

No matter how war-frenzied Americans have become, they have no heart for military aid to, much less intervention in, South Africa. Rhetoric, in the end, may be Reagan's only weapon.

VIVA NICARAGUA
Alexander Cockburn

INSIDER TRADING IN THE SENATE?
Kai Bird
Max Holland

GATSBY MEETS THE RUSSIANS
Herbert Mitgang

DEAR DIEGO
Barbara Probst Solomon

THE ANARCHISTS
Dorothy Gallagher

PORN IN THE U.S.A.

THE MEESE COMMISSION ON THE ROAD

CAROLE S. VANCE

The report of the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography, released on July 9, recommends a repressive agenda for controlling sexual images and texts: vigorous enforcement of existing obscenity laws and the passage of draconian new measures. If the Meese commission gets its way, it will be because it has launched a novel propaganda offensive that superficially uses the rhetoric of social science and feminism—though not their substance—to disguise the traditional right-wing moral agenda. As part of its ideological warfare the commission uses vague but powerful words—"degrading," "violent pornography," "harm"—to unite what it hopes is a broad constituency in an unthinking but culturally overdetermined reaction that links sexuality and its surrogate, sexual images, with harm to women and death.

The commission's 300-plus hours of public hearings and business meetings featured zany, if unintended, comedy: vice cops, born-again Christians and prosecutors thundering indictments of pornography and its progeny—divorce, premarital sex, sexual "deviation" and family destruction—in a 1950s-style epiphany of prurient righteousness. But its ninety-two recommendations, backed up by a substantial Federal, state and local apparatus already in place, pose a serious threat to free expression.

Appointed by Attorney General Edwin Meese 3d in May 1985 to find "new ways to control the problem of pornography," the panel was hardly intended to be an open-ended inquiry. It was chaired by Henry Hudson, a vigorous anti-vice prosecutor from Arlington,

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LETTERS.

NEOCONSERVATISM OF THE LEFT?

Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

Fred Block, Richard A. Cloward, Barbara Ehrenreich and Frances Fox Piven make a crucial point when they argue that the left needs to fight hard to preserve and expand social programs ["The Trouble With Full Employment," May 17]. Doubtless, it is equally true that pressing the case for "full employment" apart from other political and economic recommendations is not enough. But we seriously question whether a critique of full employment, in order to advance "the welfare state" as we know it, is the best way the left can promote the cause of human betterment and justice.

Since well before Marx, the left has recognized that labor is a basic human need, a critical activity through which people come to express themselves as distinctively human. Indeed, in a progressive society labor should be seen as a vital part of the social obligation that all able-bodied citizens owe to the development of their community. But free labor in this sense, labor directed by the creativity and planning of workers themselves, requires the working class to have direct control of the production system, the immediate control of capital. Of course full employment isn't enough; the issue should be how to establish democratic control of the system by which jobs and social roles are developed and assigned. This is the fundamental question of private economic and private patriarchal power—the issue of which class and sex is in charge of the society's productive resources. And this ought to be the framing question of left politics and especially left policy proposals.

By stressing the welfare state, Block et al. place their accent on an institutional reform that is bound to reinforce dependency, rather than on the kind of social restructuring that has always been seen by radicals as essential to the architecture of a new society. Thus, taken alone, the demand for more of the same programs within extremely hierarchical and bureaucratically oppressive welfare institutions means that the welfare state will remain a capitalist, patriarchal state, serving the consolidation of repressive power rather than liberation from it. When the writers insist that "popular movements cannot be organized around distant legislative [or presumably ideological] initiatives," they invoke a kind of neoconservatism of the left. Is it really a universal law of politics that people will fight only for policies that are already possible within their realm of experience? If that were true, if the dream of a more progressive society lacked the power to motivate action, the history of radical change could never have been made by working people.

Progressives should fight for the protections of working people against the ravages of conservative economic policy. But the welfare state was designed to save, not transform, the established class and gender hierarchies. It remains critically important, therefore, for the left to work out a program that can effectively exert leverage on the power relationships that ultimately govern capitalist society, and not only to deepen the grip of institutions that render the system more tolerable.

Sid Plotkin
Bill Scheuerman
Ira Deutchman

CRUEL CHOICES

Massapequa, N.Y.

Block, Cloward, Ehrenreich and Piven posit a cruel choice for U.S. workers: full employment in a Reagan "Coolie America" or increasing unemployment and underemployment, offset by expanded social programs. This is a choice that totally ignores the need to be engaged in paid, productive employment, which is a driving force among almost all members of our society. The "work ethic" is still alive and well. Now that it is more attainable than ever before, abandonment of the longstanding goal of full employment by progressive spokespersons is unacceptable, if not unconscionable.

Full employment could be achieved tomorrow if the standard workweek were reduced to thirty to thirty-five hours with no cut in pay, and could be continued indefinitely if the workweek were reduced further as technological advances were implemented. The time is long overdue to restore technology to its proper place as the servant of society rather than its manager.

Needed social programs such as national health insurance and child care could easily be funded with the enhanced revenue generated by a full-employment economy, particularly when supplemented by the legislative reclamation of the taxes now being lost because of the multinational corporate investment shuffle and runaway shops.

Full employment (on our terms) is more than a worthwhile goal; it is fast becoming a necessity. If we abandon our fight for it now, we will have wasted the herculean efforts invested in the expansion of educational opportunity on a generation whose future is limited to a choice between the dole and a "coolie" job.

Rose-Marie Ryerson Lopez
Long Island Progressive Coalition

JOBS AND THE WELFARE STATE

New York City

"The Trouble With Full Employment" counterposes full-employment strategy to a strategy oriented toward expanding social programs—in essence, revitalizing the welfare state. My first reaction is: Why does it have to be either/or? Can't we have a jobs strategy and a welfare state strategy simultaneously? But my second reaction is that a jobs strategy is indispensable for achieving the expansion of the welfare state.

Although Block, Cloward, Ehrenreich and Piven rightly denigrate President Reagan's full-employment rhetoric, they seem to overlook the fact that his basic program for an economic upturn intentionally maintains a remarkably high level of unemployment, along with huge underemployment. (Just imagine what the situation will be when we hit a downturn in the business cycle.) Reagan's employment policy is part and parcel of his total antilabor strategy, which has successfully held wages down, weakened unions severely and limited the base of the welfare state coalition. His strategy is to discipline the labor force using the club of potential unemployment. The same policy functions to maintain the low wage structure of the service industries that employ many of the poor.

By contrast, what would a genuine job-creation strategy look like, and what would it achieve?

§ Jobs created in the public sector could play an important role in providing the services needed by poor working women and men. A huge day-care program, for example, would not only help those families who need such services but also provide useful jobs for the large number of people living in poverty. (Other useful jobs could be created in housing construction and health care, the very things needed by the welfare state constituents referred to by Block et al.)

§ The addition of jobs in the economy increases the taxes collected and reduces unemployment insurance. Every 1 million jobs brings an additional $30 billion to the national treasury. These funds are clearly necessary to help pay for welfare services.

§ There is broad and popular support for a government program to provide jobs for the unemployed. As the Fingerhut/Granados Opinion Research Poll showed, 83 percent of Reagan Democrats agree that government has a responsibility to provide every able-bodied person with the opportunity to work. (This approach has considerable appeal to the middle class, which will play a major role in the next elections.)

§ A jobs policy would reduce the current imbalance between labor and capital; wages would increase and the labor movement would be strengthened (the latter has always been a major supporter of health and welfare services). In this context the chances for increasing the minimum wage may well be improved, a demand that should accompany the jobs strategy.

§ As Juliet B. Schor, an economist at Harvard University, has noted:

In a full- or high-employment econ-

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EDITORIALS.

Is Coke It?

Supply-side social control has been notoriously unsuccessful in American history, despite its attraction for politicians eager for a quick fix. Where money and power are committed to maintaining the supply of forbidden substances or delivering proscribed services, ordinary control is invariably ineffective. For all the stills smashed and bootleg liquor poured down the drain during the 1920s, America remained a hard-drinking country. For all the acres of marijuana plants destroyed and bales of smuggled pot confiscated, millions of people smoke the stuff every day. Hardly a week goes by that some self-serving prosecutor or police chief doesn't raid a crack factory, a pornography studio or a prostitution service. If it did any good, we wouldn't be watching *Miami Vice* every Friday.

The Administration's Bolivian campaign promises no more success than any of the other promotional busts of the fitful war on drugs. The enormous, compulsive demand on the consumption side, abetted by the hidden but substantial interests of those economic and political institutions that owe their standing in some measure to the trade in controlled substances, make stunts such as the jungle helicopter raid seem like filler for a television show rather than effective operations. Even if a few cocaine-processing plants were destroyed, others could be constructed easily enough; the billions of dollars that are involved on the supply side can

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sustain a far wider war than six Black Hawk helicopters and 160 cut-rate Rambos are capable of winning. But such is the power of the international cocaine trust that most of the factories in their jungle fastness escaped demolition. The crucial tip-offs seem to have come not from the media or from corrupt Bolivian officials, as the Administration complained after the mission's failure, but from sources deep in political and financial circles in America.

It has been estimated that the illegal drug market, both domestic and import-export, is the second-largest business in the U.S. economy, after petroleum. The banking establishments of many areas are substantially supported by drug money; South Florida's finances are so cocaine-dependent that a crash in the market would cause devastating withdrawal.

The political structure has also come to protect and use the drug economy. During the Vietnam era, the C.I.A. was in up to its elbows in the opium trade. Now that the scene has shifted to Latin America, the Company's alkaloid of choice has changed, appropriately, to cocaine. It's no secret that the Nicaraguan *contras* are in up to their noses in that powder, with the knowledge and, to a certain extent, sanction of the Administration. According to reporters covering the *contras*, officials feared that the drug connections would be brought to light during the Congressional debate on funding and that the whole Central America campaign would go down in a new Watergate. That didn't happen, and the Bolivian expedition may reasonably be considered a P.R. feint.

Whether the Bolivian government asked for the troops and helicopters or was forced to accept them, the mission represents a dangerous extension of American military power in a region where any intervention is seen as Yankee imperialism. By calling cocaine manufacture "narco-terrorism," as White House spokesman Edward Djerejian did in defense of the raid, the State Department merges its all-purpose justification for intervention with the politics of drug warfare. It sets a frightening precedent. For a long time the Administration was accusing Sandinista *comandante* Tomás Borge of involvement in cocaine exportation; why not raid his apartment in Managua? Why not permanently occupy the Pakistani opium region and thus assure the Afghan rebels of a stable supply to fund their own efforts?

Drug abuse is too big a problem in America and other countries to be the object of cynical and opportunistic political manipulation. The strategies of control that have been employed since the 1960s have, if anything, made the problem worse. Drug consumption has not abated; only the fashion in substance changes. The culture takes its cues from the zillionaires who make profits on drugs and the ultracool characters who deal them, not from the entertainers and sports stars who warn of drug dangers after their own busts, and not from Nancy Reagan. Education—the only strategy that will work—has never been tried, and it must be offered in a context that recognizes the anomie and alienation of a society in which only drugs and money are a turn-on.

COMING SOON IN THE NATION

Noreen Connell
on Neofeminism

Barbara Jeanne Fields
on Theodore Rosengarten's *Tombee*

Wilbur Wood
on Bears

Stanley Reed
on Jordan

Michael Massing and Alan Wolfe
on Accuracy In Media

U.N. Slashing

The United Nations' money troubles—so severe that supporters predict bankruptcy proceedings—worsened on July 17, when the House of Representatives voted to cut $27 million of the $210 million the United States contributes each year to the organization. And that's just the beginning. Along with other Congressional actions, this vote will add to a funding reduction of between $80 million and $100 million this year.

The financial crisis has its roots in the attitude of impatience and hostility that the Administration and Congress have taken toward the United Nations. Its best-known legislative expression is the amendment sponsored last year by Republican Senator Nancy Kassebaum. It will cut the U.S. contribution by one-fifth, or $42 million a year, unless the General Assembly agrees to a change in the voting procedure that would give the United States more clout. In the House last year, the vigorous backing of conservatives helped pass an amendment, proposed by Don Sundquist of Tennessee, that slashes $10 million to $15 million, an amount equal to that part of the U.S. contribution used to pay the salaries of Soviet bloc employees in the Secretariat. The third and potentially most damaging measure is the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act. Although it was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, the act fed budget-balancing fever, which, Congressional sources warn, could lead to a further cut in U.N. funds of as much as $37 million. The net result of this Congressional assault is that close to half of the total U.S. contribution will not be paid this year.

Administration officials insist that the United States is not responsible for the United Nations' fiscal crisis. Since the mid-1960s, other governments, including the Soviet Union, have withheld annual dues "on principle," or have delayed payments because of financial problems. But the officials fail to point out that those withholdings, totaling $225 million, accumulated gradually. The organization was able to absorb them, though it exhausted its financial reserves in the process. The cuts in U.S. funds would come directly out of the already strained operating budget.

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The current wave of U.N.-bashing paradoxically coincides with what many observers argue is increasing U.S. influence in the international body. Resolutions on terrorism and human rights, and the outcome of the emergency conference on African aid last June, seem to justify continued U.S. participation. Improvements in the organization's financing and management have already been proposed, and in some cases enacted, by the Secretary General. In May the General Assembly approved proposals that will save an estimated $60 million out of a total $830 million budget this year. When the United Nations reconvenes on September 16, other proposals for resolving the financial crisis will be on the agenda. These efforts will only be impeded by the United States' unilateral and precipitous actions.

If Congress wants to revise the terms of its financial commitments, the legal recourse—in accordance with Article 17 of the U.N. Charter—is to renegotiate. But more may be at stake than financial concerns. This Administration may well attempt to pull out of the United Nations altogether—as the right has long urged—under the guise of cost-cutting.

First Strike, 1945

Most Americans believe that it is U.S. policy to use nuclear weapons only in response to a nuclear attack by another nation. According to recent public opinion polls, only about 20 percent of Americans know that the United States has a "first-use" policy—to strike first with nuclear weapons under certain circumstances. Since August 1945 public awareness of the United States' nuclear warfighting policies has not kept pace with the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The dropping of the bomb at Hiroshima was shrouded in secrecy. First-use doctrine, for all the public knows about it, might just as well be.

Meanwhile, the United States is introducing a new generation of nuclear weapons [see Howard Morland, "Are We Readying a First Strike?" *The Nation*, March 16, 1985]. This has encouraged the Soviet Union to expand their first-strike forces. By December the first of ten MX missiles will become operational. Yet the American public remains almost blissfully unaware, or simply misinformed, about this country's nuclear warfighting policy, past and present. A recent Roper poll revealed that less than half the public knows that the United States is the only nation to have used nuclear weapons in a time of war. Eleven percent believe we never dropped the bomb. Ten percent think the United States and the Soviet Union have both used nuclear weapons.

The U.S. government has consistently refused to match a Soviet pledge never to use nuclear weapons first. Instead, it has formulated a policy to consider employing nuclear weapons in response to a conventional Soviet attack in Europe or elsewhere. Revelations that the United States has rattled its nuclear saber many times since 1945 are reported regularly, almost routinely. Last July, Richard Nixon offhandedly told *Time* that his Administration had threatened to use the bomb against the Russians at the time of the 1971 India-Pakistan war and the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, as well as during unspecified "border conflicts" between the Soviet Union and China.

Polls show that the American public supports a no-first-use policy. But nuclear warfighting strategists are sustained by wide public and media acceptance of the notion that under certain circumstances a nuclear first strike—however abhorrent—is justifiable. That is why studying the decision to drop the bomb in 1945, and the public's positive perception of that episode, is so important. Accumulating historical evidence suggests that the atomic bombings were not required to avoid a U.S. invasion of Japan and that they were intended to make a point to the Russians as much as to the Japanese.

If U.S. policy-makers, the media and the public continue to accept that a nuclear first strike was necessary "to save American lives" or "send a message to the Russians" in 1945, then such a first strike can be justified today. But this time, first use by the United States would take place in a world where we no longer hold a monopoly on the bomb.

GREG MITCHELL

Greg Mitchell is the editor of Nuclear Times.

FOLLOW-UP

When Vinson Harris, a black Federal prisoner, died on a bus operated by the U.S. Bureau of Prisons on March 4, the North Carolina assistant chief medical examiner said the cause was asphyxiation and that it was homicide [see Edward Bunker, "The Lynching of Vinson Harris," *The Nation*, May 17]. Nobody has disputed the facts. The Bureau of Prisons refuses to make a statement while the case is under review, or to cooperate with the medical examiner. The guards who were on the bus and who participated in wrapping Harris like a mummy with tape and Ace bandages are still on the job; they haven't even been suspended pending investigation. Not only that, one of the two prisoners who originally told the press about the murder was taken back to the Federal correctional institution where the bus is based and where the lieutenant who directed the deed still works. There guards beat and kicked him while he was in handcuffs, as punishment and threat for blowing the whistle.

Nine weeks after the murder, Edwin Meese's Justice Department said it had no record of the case. Now officials there say the case is under review by the criminal section of the civil rights division and it might take months to decide whether or not to prosecute. They've spent three months investigating. What is there to investigate? This is no intricate conspiracy; it is murder plain and simple, with abundant witnesses. Perhaps beating and murdering prisoners is just part of what the Justice Department means by law and order.

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BEAT THE DEVIL.

Nicaragua: Now More Than Ever

After seven years of the Nicaraguan revolution—whose anniversary I helped celebrate at a congenial rally in Los Angeles—what can we enter on our side of the ledger? These days many liberals and not a few leftists are in such a funk that they are unable to read the record clearly. So let's state it simply. The revolution has survived and is immeasurably stronger than it was in the first days and months after the eviction of Somoza. People who never had so much as ten square meters to call their own now have land titles in their pockets. Today a poor woman in Nicaragua can expect prenatal care and has some hope that her child will not die from malnutrition or infectious disease in the first five months of its life. The same mother knows that her child will be taught to read and write. For the first time in their history thousands of Nicaraguans have the chance to put their print on the political complexion of their country. The Sandinistas' revolution has not only offered political meaning to the lives of Nicaraguans, it has injected imagination and spiritual creativity into the socialist experiment.

Although these transformations have been achieved under conditions of siege, sabotage and murder, there has been no major repression in Nicaragua. Contrary to predictions, there was no bloodbath after Somoza and his Guardsmen were driven out, thus gravely disappointing the revolution's enemies. When the C.I.A. was drawing up plans for its attacks on Nicaragua back in 1981, one of those privy to them was David MacMichael. He later testified to the World Court on the agency's game plan: "It was hoped that the Nicaraguan government would clamp down on civil liberties within Nicaragua itself, arresting its opposition, demonstrating its allegedly inherent totalitarian nature and thus increase domestic dissent within the country."

Despite such desires the government of Nicaragua is still a popular government and one that has remained open to a singular degree. Nicaragua's critics must answer a simple question. Do they make their standards universally applicable? If they don't, then they must answer to charges of political opportunism, partiality and the double standard. Those who regularly denounce Nicaragua for censorship and repression remain silent on the matter of Israel's infinitely greater transgressions. Anyone who wants a detailed comparison should read Noam Chomsky's *Turning the Tide*, pages 72 and following.

What unpopular government would dare put guns in the hands of tens of thousands of its citizens? What other country struggling to defend itself against constant attack would allow U.S. politicians and *contra* sponsors such as Robert Leiken regularly within its borders, permit them to travel around unhindered, listen to them call for a U.S.-backed invasion and then let them back in the country again? What other country under siege would have tolerated, for as long as it did, a newspaper financed from the United States whose editors were supporting an invasion? What other country would have tolerated a bishop, a so-called disciple of Christ, who went to Washington; openly and sympathetically conferred with the *contra* chieftains at a meeting convened by the Heritage Foundation; there told repeated lies about Sandinista treatment of priests inside Nicaragua; endorsed the idea of invasion; then returned to his country and refused to condemn the *contras*, who, on July 2, blew up a truckload of thirty-two men, women and children, two of them babies?

Invite any one of the critics of Nicaragua to imagine a reversal of circumstances, to envisage the United States on the receiving end of proportionate sabotage and terror, and then ask them what sort of dissent would be permitted here, bearing in mind what happened to Japanese-Americans during World War II. When it comes to respect for freedom and human rights the supporters of Nicaragua need accept no lectures from a government, or its apologists, that has flouted the World Court and demanded $100 million for a gang of people proved again and again to be murderers, drug runners, rapists and thieves.

Reagan's Consensus

To return to our side of the ledger and further elementary propositions: the Nicaraguan revolution shook up the entire hemisphere, in which it provided the first sustained ray of hope since the Cuban revolution. It has shown how one small country can disturb the foreign policy of the United States. Would the United States be expressing its "concern" for democracy in Chile, its "hopes" for democracy in Guatemala, if it had not been for fear of the Nicaraguan example? In this country the revolution has educated those generations coming of age since the end of the Vietnam War on what it can mean to be a Third World country in the late twentieth century that refuses to be ruled by a U.S.-appointed dictator, by the local U.S. Embassy and by the I.M.F.

What about the other side of the ledger? Since 1979 Ronald Reagan and his associates have managed to rebuild a consensus in the U.S. establishment on the proper policy toward revolutionary developments in the Caribbean basin, an attitude that can be summed up in three words: search and destroy. In 1979 there was within the U.S. establishment a wing opposing military intervention, just as it supported cuts in military spending and serious arms negotiations with the Soviet Union. That wing has met with defeat. One index of the extent of that defeat is the complicity of the U.S. press in this consensus. The press will attempt sustained criticism of the U.S. government only if there are significant divisions among the ruling elites. There are no such divisions, and in consequence most of the press offers no resistance to Reagan's policies and propaganda concerning Central America.

Consider two recent examples, out of thousands. Amid almost universal indifference on the part of television and the press to the murder of those thirty-two Nicaraguan

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peasants by the *contras*—murders which took place while their prime sponsor, Ronald Reagan, was toasting Liberty in New York Harbor—*The New York Times*'s Stephen Kinzer, under the prodding of his foreign desk, discussed the case in a dispatch published on July 11. It was one of the most shamefully, and cynically, lax pieces of reporting in my memory. The explosion occurred within thirty miles of Nicaragua's northern border, and although other reporters had filed material from Jinotega, Kinzer did not bother to leave Managua. Instead, he quoted unnamed "diplomats," from which we may infer that he summoned up the strength to call the U.S. Embassy, who suggested to him that Sandinista soldiers may have been aboard the truck or that Sandinista soldiers may have planted the mines.

The Consenting Miners

The day after the *New York Times* reporter disdained a day's drive to investigate a war crime a *New York Times* editorialist delivered himself of a sermon titled "The Sandinista Road to Stalinism." It would be impossible for anyone unacquainted with the recent history of Nicaragua to gather from this editorial that what the editorialist was pleased to call Nicaragua's "civil war" had been organized and sustained by the United States, with motives described above by David MacMichael. Cardinal Obando y Bravo was described as someone "advocating reconciliation among all Nicaraguans," a curious description for this politically brutish opponent of the revolution and of the popular church.

I would like to see this editorialist (whether it be Karl Meyer, Jack Rosenthal or the editorial-page editor himself, Max Frankel), along with Robert Silvers, the editors of *The New Republic* and every other "moderate" advocate of funding for the "new" *contras*, travel to northern Nicaragua and then take a few early morning walks along the backroads, in front of those rickety trucks carrying peasants back and forth from town. It might serve to concentrate their minds, and in the event of untimely contact with U.S.-exported terrorism, they would—as they flew skyward—at least be demonstrating that they had the consistency to put their mouths and their money in the same place. Before the Consenting Miners set off, they could glance at a letter from Nicaragua that a couple of workers for Witness for Peace, Ed and Liz Griffin-Nolan, sent to friends in the United States last June:

> "More people are dying now of measles than from the war," he [a young Nicaraguan priest] told us. 159 children have died in one small community, Cano Sucio, victims of a disease that just a few years ago was almost wiped out. Everyone in the town is afraid to go get the vaccine which could save the children, because to do so would mark them as "Sandinista collaborators" in the eyes of the contras . . . . a few days after we got back to Managua a mine exploded under a pickup truck in northern Jinotega, killing nine campesinos and a Spanish nurse practitioner, all of whom were participating in a vaccination campaign. The contra war doesn't just kill with bullets—it kills with measles and other diseases. The kids continue to die—one day recently they buried five in tiny coffins in Cano Sucio . . . .
>
> The next day we were up early. The road to Sonpaupera is a winding mountain stretch. On both sides the wooded terrain lends itself to ambushes. It's eerie to ride on a deserted mountain road with no traffic, littered by more broken glass and debris than you'd expect to find in a city or along a crowded highway. Rounding a bend, we were stopped short by the horrible sight of a mangled Toyota truck . . . which had obviously tripped some powerful sort of mine in the road. Sam and I got out of the truck. The only recognizable piece was the tailgate, which had been blown, along with the bed, some 40–50 feet ahead of the chassis. [This was not the truck blown up on July 2.] The steel bands from the tires sat ringing the rims. The motor lies on the ground. Toothbrushes, bits of bloody backpacks, splintered gun stocks, collections of bloodied clothing, were scattered along the road, up and down the surrounding hillside. Among the victims was the son of Rosario, the man I shared an evening with in Matagalpa. He died along with two other Housing Ministry workers and seven militia men.

At this point we can safely predict a cry of relief from the Consenting Miners. "Militia men! The truck had militia men on it! It's all right to kill militia men. They are part of the Nicaraguan forces." Let the Consenting Miners step out along the road, remembering that they are part of President Reagan's forces. Let them finish the letter from Ed and Liz:

> As I walked through the wreckage, I felt so strongly . . . the perversity of the kind of violence so rampant in this war. It is the violence that strikes terror. It may rouse some anger, but its residue is terror. Another of the men killed was a young engineer named Roger. His young wife had told Sam and Ann . . . a few days before, "All my husband had wanted to do was to help to put roofs over the campesinos." When the truck hit the mine, it was coming back from carrying supplies to build houses for campesinos at a refugee resettlement. The contras' message is a clear warning to anyone involved with the government in any way, even in the most important and basic human services.

This is the reality that the major media have suppressed, and with their vital support Reagan has forged his consensus. We now await a major intensification of the war against Nicaragua, in which the violence done to truth will intensify in equal measure. Reagan may have a consensus in the establishment and on Capitol Hill. He has not got a national consensus. Poll after poll has shown that, despite all the propaganda. Supporters of Nicaragua sometimes forget their strength, actual and potential, in towns across the country, in the labor movement, in the churches, on campuses, in the alternative media. The things to be done are simple: persuasion, organization, the maintenance of a debate that the Reagan Administration finds unacceptable but that the mass media must learn to respect and to report. The fight could last years, but if we look at where they are at and where we are at, it's a fight that can be won.

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CAPITOL LETTER.

KAI BIRD AND MAX HOLLAND

■ Silver-finger Symms

Although cashing in has become a trademark of Ronald Reagan's Washington, Republican Senator Steven Symms of Idaho is setting new standards: he isn't even waiting until he leaves public office.

According to his annual financial disclosure forms, Symms has frequently taken positions on silver futures in the commodity market, then introduced legislation designed to bolster silver prices, and, after prices have duly risen, sold his futures for a handsome profit. At times he has been a heavy, almost daily, trader in silver commodities, often controlling tens of thousands of ounces.

Beginning in 1975, on at least five out of seven occasions when legislation affecting the price of silver has been before Congress, Symms was actively trading in silver futures. He co-sponsored all seven bills.

When Symms made his initial transaction he was serving on the House committee that regulates mining. And when he first ran for the Senate, in 1980, his opponent accused him of having a conflict of interest. So for a short time Symms refrained from dabbling in the silver market, but he defended himself by saying: "There are no laws or rules in Congress to prevent any member from trading in stocks, bonds or commodities, and at no time have I tried to conceal the fact that I have done so. Like many Americans, I have proudly chosen to invest my savings in the productive side of our economy." Now, new information has been unearthed on Symms's commodity trading by Mark Schapiro, formerly with the Center for Investigative Reporting.

Symms is right that there's no law barring a member of Congress from trading in commodities, but obviously anyone with advance knowledge of legislation affecting the market is in a position to make a financial killing. Tom Wolfe, a former director of gold and silver operations at the Treasury Department, told Schapiro that commodity traders "will latch onto anything at the moment . . . anything that seems to have some consequence for the market. . . . It [legislation] is one of those things that bangs markets around."

Between 1979 and 1982, financial disclosure forms report, Symms gained more than $50,000 from commodity trading, largely from silver futures. (Symms did lose some money in commodities in 1980 and 1984.) Throughout this period he played a key legislative role in bolstering the silver market, co-sponsoring such measures as a 1979 bill requiring the government to purchase $513 million worth of silver for its already enormous emergency stockpile. In addition, his silver bills would have benefited the Hunt brothers of Texas, whose speculations in 1979 and early 1980 brought them near to controlling the world price of silver. Both have contributed to Symms's campaigns, Nelson Bunker Hunt having served on his 1980 finance committee.

Since 1971 the government has stockpiled some 136 million ounces of silver; over the years the General Accounting Office and the Pentagon have repeatedly said there was no national security need for any silver stockpile. But each time Congress has tried to sell only a bit of the stockpile on the open market, the "Silver Senators"—led by Symms and including Strom Thurmond, Jesse Helms and Idaho's senior Senator, James McClure—have blocked the move.

In 1979 alone the stockpiling of this "nonstrategic" metal cost U.S. taxpayers an estimated $279 million in lost interest payments. Symms defends this cost, saying, "From a national security standpoint it is a mistake for us to sell anything out of our strategic stockpiles."

Among Symms's notable transactions was one on January 26, 1983. He bought one March silver-futures contract of 5,000 ounces at $13.23 per ounce, bringing to seven the total number of contracts he bought that month. The next day he and Senator McClure introduced a bill that required any sales from the silver stockpile be in the form of commemorative coins. (In contrast to Symms, McClure has never traded on the silver market.) Such sales would insure that any decline in the government's stockpile would not be matched by a price decline on the open silver market. The market responded eagerly to this prospect: by February 2 silver prices had shot up to $13.97 per ounce. Symms promptly sold five silver contracts on February 2 and 3, when silver was going for between $13.97 and $14.42. Because he had purchased these futures contracts, before introducing his bill, when the price was between $11.48 and $13.23, Symms made more than $25,000 on the transactions in just a few weeks.

Symms still occasionally trades in silver, according to his 1986 financial disclosure form, though prices have fallen dramatically in the past two years, to between $5 and $8 an ounce. When interviewed about the propriety of his silver trading, the Senator said: "You are pulling up the same red herring that was dredged up in my last campaign. It is interesting that it is being brought up now." Symms says his silver speculations do not violate the Senate ethics code because the issue affects the whole state. "I am pro all things that are favorable to Idaho: silver, wheat and cattle." He added, "If I had made money in silver that would be a different question, but I have consistently lost." Because Idaho is a major producer of silver, Symms's silver speculation does coincide with the interests of his constituents. But Standing Rule of the Senate XXXVII requires that "no member . . . shall knowingly use his official position to introduce or aid the progress or passage of legislation, a principal purpose of which is to further the pecuniary interest . . . of a limited class of persons or enterprises, when he, or his immediate family . . . are members of the affected class."

Symms has crossed the ethical line between serving constituents and using his Senate perch for personal profit. And oh, yes, in the course of the telephone interview the Senator dispensed a gratuitous tip, which we would like to share with *Nation* readers. He suggested that given the low price of silver, now would be a good time to buy. "You should buy bullion and put it in your safety deposit box," he said.

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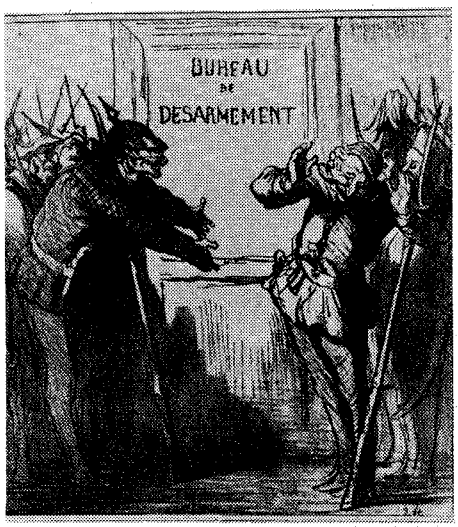
ARTICLES.

Plus ça change...

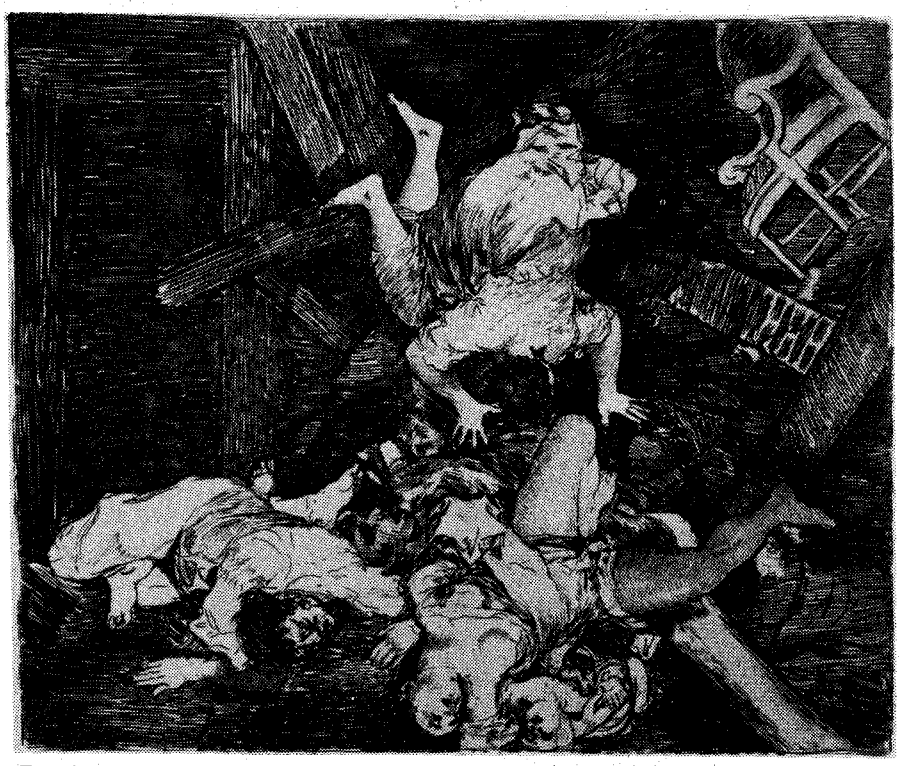
RALPH E. SHIKES



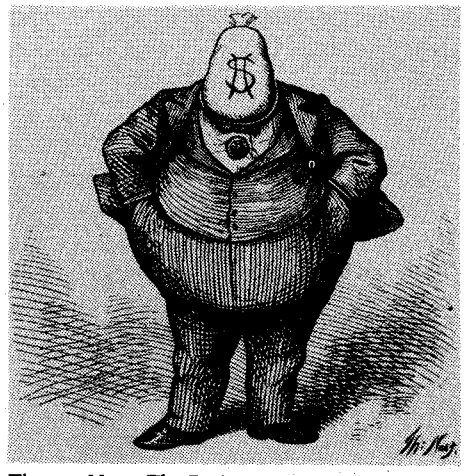
Honoré Daumier. *After You.* 1868. Lithograph.

Théopole Alexander Steinlen. *Winter. Are Prisons Heated? L'Assiette au Beurre.* April 4, 1901.

. . . plus c'est la même chose. History repeats itself. Etc., etc. Hoary clichés, but alas, only too true. The artists who drew social and political commentaries a century ago were unwittingly prophetic. The elderly couple on a winter bench longing for the warmth of a prison—Paris 1901, or New York City 1986? "After you!" says the German military to its French counterpart in the doorway of the Office of Disarmament when the two superpowers faced each other in 1870, and "After you!" echoes down the years today. Goya's tangle of tumbled bodies—Spain in 1804 or Beirut in 1986? Thomas Nast's symbol of a corrupt politician seemed a relic of the past, until the recent headlines. Tammany Hall has moved north to the Bronx and Queens. And the trust lobbies—have they left the halls of Congress? Reginald Marsh's *Breadline* of 1932 is only too painfully familiar, if shorter, today. In the 1910s José Posada's revolutionary peasant was garroted; today in many areas of Central America he is disemboweled. Adolph Dehn's *The Petroleum Age* of 1921 is only too prophetic of an industrialism that has brought pollution and acid rain along with its benefits. The spirit behind Paul Klee's gothic, turn-of-the-century etch-



Francisco Goya. *Ravages of War.* 1810-20. Etching, drypoint. From *Los Desastres de la Guerra.*



Thomas Nast. *The Brains.*
1871. Wood engraving. *Harper's Weekly.*
October 21, 1871.

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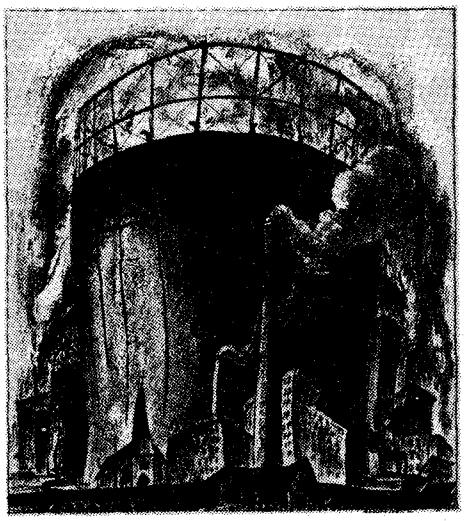
ing *Two Men Each Believing the Other to Be in a Higher Position* is eternal—daily encounters in Hollywood, on Madison Avenue, on Wall Street, in Washington and in Moscow too.

And so it went. And so it goes.

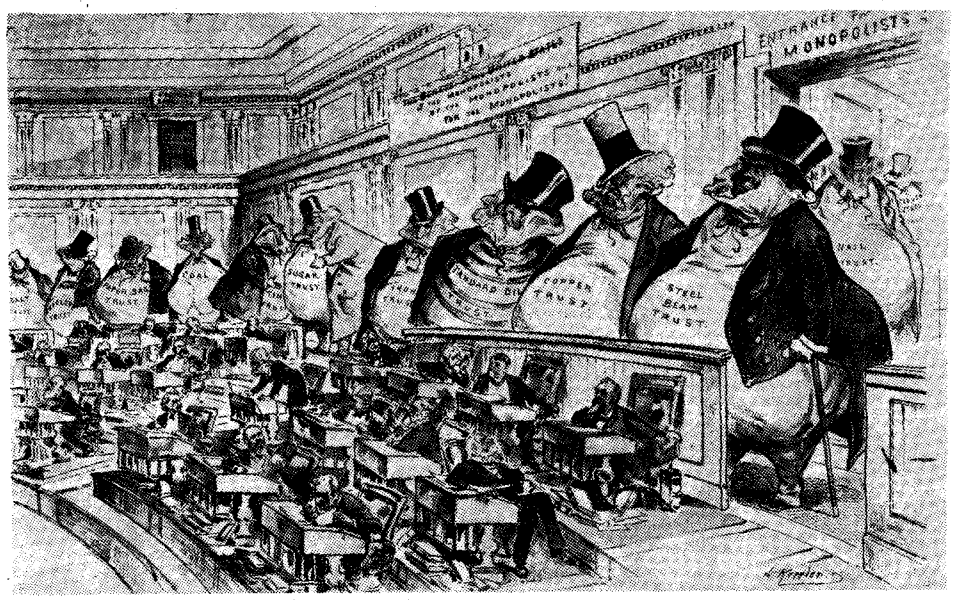
Paul Klee. *Two Men Meet Each Believing the Other to Be in a Higher Position.* 1903. Etching.

José Posada. *Incident of the Agrarian Revolution.* 1910-12. Woodblock.

Reginald Marsh. *Breadline—No One Has Starved.* 1932. Etching.



Adolph Dehn. *The Petroleum Age. The Liberator.* July 21, 1921.



Joseph Keppler. *The Bosses of the Senate. Puck.* January 23, 1889.

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LETTER FROM SICILY

Jay Gatsby Meets The Russians

On the question of whether the era of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev will usher in a cultural "thaw," mixed signals Continue to emanate from Moscow. At the Writers' Congress last June, some delegates challenged the censorship of long-banned books, attacked the stifling cultural bureaucracy and called for the lifting of literary taboos. Other writers, led by Georgy Markov, who recently resigned as head of the Soviet Writers' Union, have championed conservative literary models. In May, Markov made a speech praising socialist realism which, according to the Washington Post *correspondent in Moscow, "struck Soviet literary observers as a negative omen for those expecting an early relaxation of cultural rigidity . . . and out of step with the style of openness advocated by the new Soviet leader." Attending a writers' meeting in Sicily in late spring, Herbert Mitgang caught an echo of Markov in the views expressed by the Soviet participants.* —*The Editors*

HERBERT MITGANG

Palermo

It happened in the name of one of the least political of major American novelists, F. Scott Fitzgerald, in one of the least imaginable forums, the Steri Palace, which six centuries ago housed Sicily's viceroys and later became an office of the Inquisition. *The Great Gatsby* somehow served as a rallying cry at a literary encounter that turned into literary politics between writers from the Soviet Union and the United States. The misinterpretation of *Gatsby* provided a sad commentary on the chances for greater candor between writers from both countries, even while abroad.

At the start of a triangular meeting among Soviet, American and Italian authors held here several weeks ago the language was cordial, but then the official talk got heavy, despite the gathering's uncontroversial theme: Literature, Tradition, Values. In a prepared paper which he supplemented with an abrasive polemic, Professor Felix Kuznetsov, a philologist, critic and president of the Moscow Writers' Union, declared, "I would hate to be accused of propaganda and of talking politics instead of talking literature." Whereupon he proceeded to do just that. During the course of his twenty-minute diatribe, he succeeded in distorting the theme of *The Great Gatsby*.

"The national tradition and the social conditions leave no room, in our literature, for *The Great Gatsby* phenomenon," Kuznetsov said. "Even satirists treat personal success, material prosperity, as something banal, unspiritual and even vulgar, something that can never be associated with the notion of greatness."

That was a bit much for American ears. It was one thing to blame the arms race and other tensions in the world on the United States alone and to call the Soviet Union a "humanist" society and the United States a "consumerist" society. Several of the Americans in the group assumed such talk was designed for the benefit of the *Izvestiia* correspondent and home consumption. Or it might have been intended to impress the vagrant Italian Communist Party newspapers in Palermo and Rome, which in recent years have drifted off on their own independent course. In any case, it did not delight the members of the Italian press in the *palazzo*, who found the professor's old-line speech boring and said so to an American journalist.

Kuznetsov's unsophisticated interpretation of *Gatsby* trampled on an American literary icon. Privately, one of the U.S. authors suggested that the Russians should be so lucky to have a modern Fitzgerald to kick around in a *dacha* in the Peredelkino Writers' Union colony outside Moscow.

Over the course of the encounter, first in Palermo and continuing in Acireale, on the dramatic eastern resort coast below Mount Etna, the American authors found their voices. They were led, informally, by Elizabeth Hardwick, the literary critic and novelist, who lightheartedly called herself "the chairmanessa." She was assisted by Karen Kennerly, executive director of the PEN American Center. Others included novelists Robert Stone, Mary Gordon, David Leavitt and Jay McInerney, and theater critics Richard Gilman and John Simon.

Responding to Kuznetsov's interpretation of *Gatsby* as a mere symbol of American materialism, McInerney said that the professor had taken the title of the novel too literally and that the use of the word "Great" was highly ironic. Jay Gatsby had tried to create himself out of thin air, he noted, and the point Fitzgerald made was that great wealth does not necessarily lead to personal fulfillment: "At the end his life was a hollow, false dream."

In an erudite talk—prepared, as those by the other American authors, almost at the last moment—Stone emphasized that his country had a long-held interest in its own democratic history and that its writers developed out of a strong cultural and literary tradition. Gordon traced her personal heritage as a writer to her parents and grandparents, to their Catholic and Jewish backgrounds and Italian and Irish roots in Europe. Then, in an innocent-sounding but pointed comment about literary parallels, she mentioned the Grand Inquisitor in Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. None of the Soviet delegates picked it up.

A few of the Russians put their heads together and questioned Leavitt after he said that "minorities, feminists, Jews and homosexuals were turning out the most vital fiction today," and that "if you don't want to get your hands dirty, don't write." One of them replied: "I am both a poet and a Marxist. We are in favor of the democratization of literature even though our writing is considered puritanical. You should be tolerant of us, even if we don't write about

Herbert Mitgang of The New York Times *is a novelist and playwright.*

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homosexuality. The human experience is about both large and small events."

Yassen Zassoursky, the dean of the journalism faculty at Moscow University, admitted that some American women were admirable because they wrote with a sense of justice. He casually said that Harriet Beecher Stowe was a better writer than George Eliot. Zassoursky's test of literature—at least when speaking officially—seemed stuck in the social realism that nourished the boy-tractor-driver meets girl-tractor-driver parody of Soviet fiction in the past.

Hardwick came to the defense of greater openness in literary themes, giving as one example Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*. Once again, a Soviet writer, albeit one who had emigrated to the United States, was used to underscore a point in front of the Soviet delegation. Describing the novel's title character as a teen-age nymphet, she said, "To put it mildly, the story is suggestive." As had Stone, Hardwick talked about the interests and responsibilities of serious authors in the nuclear age. "Being here places us in history," she said. "Fiction must justify us in life, Conrad tells us. Can writers function morally? I believe they can. Peace is right here—now. War is right here—now. We must avoid lies. We had better develop a moral stand—now."

Alessandra Contenti, who teaches American literature at the University of Rome, said she was not disturbed by the Soviet accusations that American fiction is violent and that its creators pander to mass culture. "There is a lot of violence in Hamlet and Hemingway," Contenti said, "but both include values, and Singer and Bellow have also taken a lot from the so-called mass culture."

John Simon offered an acerbic statement to the effect that the Russians and Italians had sent poets, or those who acted like poets, while the U.S. group did not include even a single part-time poet. This, he said, proved the naïveté of the Americans in literary politics, since such meetings are ruled by poets. Then he swung hard, saying that he looked forward to the time "when a Mandelstam will no longer die in a camp, when a Pasternak will be able to go to Stockholm and collect his Nobel Prize, when a filmmaker such as Sergey Peredjanov will not be sentenced to five years of jail for being a homosexual, and when merely for marching in the wrong peace march and publishing in banned trade union publications the poetess Irina Ratushinskaya will not be condemned to seven years of hard labor to be followed by five years of internal exile."

Kuznetsov and Nikolai Federenko, the diplomat and editor who headed the Soviet group, took offense at Simon's remarks about poets as actors. So did two of the Italian poets, Giovanni Raboni and Aldo Gargani; the latter said he found Simon's words "banal and trite." Flushed, Federenko called Simon's statement an "intervention." But neither he nor any of the Soviet delegates addressed themselves to the fate of Ratushinskaya.

Watching Federenko, one of the American novelists remarked, "I find him scary."

Later Andrei Vosnesensky, the Soviet international superstar, gave a poetry recital at the San Domenico Hotel in Taormina. Listening to him perform in the splendor of the elegant, consumerist hotel, everyone finally found common ground. He recited a new poem he had written on the spot titled "Taormina," the last line of which was, "Here, the mafia of peace combats the mafia of war." It was a pleasing notion.

On Pirandello's island, enigmas as well as ideals lingered on all sides. One of the older Soviet academics from Leningrad defended avant-garde artists, including Kandinsky and Chagall, as forerunners of traditionalism. And after venturing into the bear's den by boldly interpreting Chekhov's dramatic style and tradition, Richard Gilman, who teaches theater at Yale University, returned to the podium on the final day and said: "Freedom. I have not heard that word used here at all." That single word connected all the underlying currents hidden below the polite surface of the literary encounter in Sicily. □

Meese Commission

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

Virginia, who had been praised by President Reagan for closing down every adult bookstore in his district. Hudson was assisted by executive director Alan Sears, who has a reputation in the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Western District of Kentucky as a tough opponent of obscenity, and his staff of vice cops and attorneys. Their schedule called for six public hearings, with preselected topics, in Washington (general), Chicago (law enforcement), Houston (social science), Los Angeles (production and distribution), Miami (child pornography) and New York (organized crime).

Prior to convening, seven of the eleven commissioners had taken public stands opposing pornography and supporting obscenity law as a means to control it. James Dobson heads the fundamentalist organization Focus on the Family. "I have a personal dislike for pornography and all it implies," he told *The Washington Post*. Judge Edward Garcia, recently appointed by Reagan to Federal District Court in California, prosecuted obscenity cases before becoming a judge. Diane Cusack, a member of the Scottsdale, Arizona, City Council, urged residents to take photographs and license numbers of patrons entering the local adult theater. Father Bruce Ritter, a Franciscan priest, directs Covenant House, a home for runaways in New York's Times Square area, and is an outspoken critic of pornography. Attorney Harold (Tex) Lezar played an instrumental role in setting up the commission as an aide to Reagan's first Attorney General, William French Smith. Frederick Schauer, a law professor at the University of Michigan, has written extensively on obscenity. He argues that forms of expression in-

Carole S. Vance, an anthropologist at the Columbia University School of Public Health who observed the Meese commission over the past year, is writing an ethnography about the commission and sex in American culture. She edited Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality *(Routledge & Kegan Paul).*

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tended to be sexually arousing are less like speech and more like dildos, and are thus exempt from First Amendment protection: "The prototypical pornographic item on closer analysis shares more of the characteristics of sexual activity than the communicative process."

The four members of the panel with no public positions on pornography included Park Elliott Dietz, a psychiatrist at the University of Virginia and a consultant to the Federal Bureau of Investigation Academy, who specializes in the subject of sexual deviations ("paraphilias"); Judith Becker, a Columbia University psychologist known for her research on rapists and rape victims; Ellen Levine, a vice president of CBS and the editor of *Woman's Day*; and Deanne Tilton, head of the California Consortium of Child Abuse Councils. As events unfolded, those four, joined occasionally by Schauer, constituted the commission's moderate bloc. The three moderate women frequently resisted the staff's conservative agenda. They signed a statement that, while abhorring "the exploitation of vulnerable people" in pornography, rejected "judgemental and condescending efforts to speak on women's behalf as though they were helpless, mindless children." In the end Becker and Levine wrote a devastating eighteen-page dissent as their introduction to the report.

The Show Trial

Any pretense of objectivity that the commission might have wished to claim was dispelled by its glaring and persistent biases in gathering and evaluating evidence. The list of witnesses invited to testify was no more open than the commissioners' minds: 77 percent supported greater control, if not elimination, of sexually explicit material. Heavily represented were law-enforcement officers and members of vice squads (68 of 208 witnesses), politicians and spokespersons for conservative antipornography groups like Citizens for Decency through Law and the National Federation for Decency.

Of the "victims" of pornography, many told tales of divorce, promiscuity, masturbation and child abuse—all, in their view, caused by sexually explicit material. For these born-again victims, the remedy for complex social problems was found in renouncing pornography and sexual sin. The vice cops on the staff energetically recruited the alleged victims to testify, assisted by antipornography groups and prosecutors. The same zeal was not applied to the search for people who had positive experiences.

Witnesses appearing before the commission were treated in a highly uneven manner. Commissioners accepted virtually any claim made by antipornography witnesses as true, asking few probing questions and making only the most cursory requests for evidence or attempts to determine witness credibility. Those who did not support more restriction of sexually explicit speech were often met with rudeness and hostility, and their motives for testifying were impugned. The panelists asked social scientist Edward Donnerstein if pornographers had tried to influence his research findings or threatened his life. They asked actress Colleen Dewhurst, testifying for Actors' Equity about the dangers of censorship in the theater, if persons convicted of obscenity belonged to the union, and if the union was influenced by organized crime. They questioned her at length about the group's position on child pornography.

The commission flagrantly violated ordinary rules of fair procedure. In the most publicized case it sent a letter on Justice Department letterhead to twenty-three large bookstore chains, booksellers and convenience stores, stating that the panel had "received testimony alleging that your company is involved in the sale or distribution of pornography," and that the final report would list "identified distributors." (The anonymous allegations came from the testimony of the Rev. Donald Wildmon, executive director of the National Federation for Decency.) "Failure to respond," the letter concluded, "will necessarily be accepted as an indication of no objection." Southland Corporation, owner of the 7-Eleven chain which Wildmon singled out as one of "the leading retailers of porn magazines in America," decided after receiving the commission's letter that it would no longer carry *Playboy* and *Penthouse*. The magazines and the American Booksellers Association filed suit. On July 3, Federal District Court Judge John Garrett Penn ruled against the commission in the *Playboy* case, giving the Justice Department five days to write to all the companies it contacted and explain that the original letter did not mean to imply their publications were obscene or to threaten a blacklist. The commission was also prohibited from publishing Wildmon's accusations in its final report.

Another lawsuit against the commission—to counter the staff's attempt to withhold a draft of the report and all its working papers, available to the public under the Federal Advisory Committee Act—was filed by the American Civil Liberties Union. The commission's staff backed off its claim that possession of these documents in the hands of organized crime might constitute a threat to itself, and settled before getting to court.

All of these defects, as well as the serious constitutional questions raised by the panel's recommendations, are reviewed in *Polluting the Censorship Debate*, a 200-page summary and critique prepared by A.C.L.U. legislative counsel Barry Lynn, an articulate and effective critic.

The commission's heavy-handed procedures raised the hackles of some of its own members as well as outsiders. The law-enforcement recommendations were discussed and voted on before the hearings were half over, leading some commissioners to ask if the panel could logically favor stricter penalties before establishing harm. Commissioners were even asked to vote in favor of a pending Senate bill that they had never seen. Hudson and Sears persisted in ramming through recommendations that ignored commissioners' input, eventually angering moderates and inspiring them to resist. The "vibrator bill" was a prime example, a model statute that would ban as obscene "any device designed or marketed as useful primarily for the stimulation of human genital organs." When Becker, Levine and Tilton strongly objected, the chair deferred the bill rather than risk losing a vote, but then he brought it up again twice.

Battles were also fought over the report's text, which by March had swollen to more than a thousand pages of

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disputed prose, putting forth adventurous legal theories and recommendations that even some commissioners found excessive. Schauer, "extremely disturbed" by the report, began to write his own, first billed as a dissent. His 214-page essay—cohesive, professional and more persuasive in marshaling feminist and social science arguments—made its debut at the final work session in April. The expected showdown between the staff and Schauer was averted when commissioners adopted both reports. Inspection of the complete table of contents reveals two reports, each covering similar topics. The Schauer draft, although admittedly more moderate, provides a liberal gloss to a conservative set of recommendations. Many readers, journalists included, never get beyond the Schauer essay, and conclude that the document is not as right wing as they had expected.

The Testimony

If these were the McCarthy hearings of sex, they were scripted by the cast of *Saturday Night Live*. The atmosphere throughout the hearings was one of excited repression: witnesses alternated between chronicling the negative effects of pornography and making sensationalized presentations of "it." Taking a lead from women's antipornography groups, everyone had a slide show: the F.B.I., the U.S. Customs Service, the U.S. Postal Service and sundry vice squads. The material shown was hardly mainstream fare; it was unconventional, difficult for the average viewer to relate to and likely to be upsetting. Becker and Levine characterized it as "very violent and extremely degrading." At every "lights out," spectators would rush to one side of the room to see the screen, which was angled toward the commissioners. Were the hearing room a ship, we would have capsized many times.

Alan Sears told the other commissioners he hoped to include some "good stuff" in the report, and its two volumes and 1,960 pages faithfully reflect the censors' fascination with the thing they love to hate. The report lists in alphabetical order the titles of materials found in sixteen adult bookstores in six cities: 2,370 films, 725 books and 2,325 magazines, beginning with *A Cock Between Friends* and ending with *69 Lesbians Munching*. A detailed plot summary is given for the book *The Tying Up of Rebecca*, along with descriptions of sex aids advertised in the books, their cost and how to order them. Videos like "Debbie Does Dallas" and "Biker Slave Girls" were described in loving detail. Were there not some question about the applicability of copyright law to arguably obscene material, the many pages of direct quotation might prompt a serious copyright claim.

Witnesses made their unique contributions. Judith Trevillian, from Citizens Against Pornography, Michigan, brought a portable tape recorder to reproduce for the audience "the chilling horror I felt in my kitchen after my first encounter with Dial-a-Porn." "Suck on my boobs. I'm coming all over my hand," boomed the tape, as the audience sat in attentive silence. In Miami a patient of a local therapist appeared as a victim of pornography. "At age 12, I was a typically normal, healthy boy and my life was filled with normal activities and hobbies," he stated. But that changed when he found a deck of "hard core" pornographic playing cards, depicting penetration, fellatio and cunnilingus. "By the age of 16, after a steady diet of *Playboy*, *Penthouse*, *Scandinavian Children*, perverted paperback books and sexology magazines, I had to see a doctor for neuralgia of the prostate." He went on to promiscuous sex with two women, but eventually found Christ. He concluded, "If it weren't for my faith in God and the forgiveness in Jesus Christ, I would now possibly be a pervert, an alcoholic or dead."

Elderly vice cops enjoyed a day of glory after two decades of disrespect. Homer Young, a retired F.B.I. agent, recalled examples of pornography he had seen. Topping the list was a photograph of "a vagina surrounded by a woman." Some testified that current obscenity laws aren't enforced because of negligence on the part of prosecutors and judges. When did this laxity start? another retired agent was asked. "The same year J. Edgar Hoover died," he replied.

But the laxity is less complete than the right-wing fears. Testimony revealed details of increased activity and ingenious new strategies in an already functioning regulatory apparatus. In response to complaints from conservatives that the Postal Service in New York was slacking off in its surveillance of mail from Scandinavia, the porn epicenter, the Post Office rerouted such mail to Wilmington, North Carolina, where it could be handled properly. And the F.B.I. contacted the 150 customers of a small-scale pornographer under investigation, interrogating them and confiscating the material they had received.

The Meese commission conducted a show trial in which pornography was found guilty. But producing an updated discourse about pornography and sex proved difficult, despite the staff's tight control over witnesses, topics and rules of evidence. The chief supporters and beneficiaries of the commission were conservatives and fundamentalists, whose main objection to pornography is its depiction—and, they believe, advocacy—of sex outside of marriage and procreation. The Justice Department knew that this position would no longer sell outside the right wing. The attack on sexually explicit material had to be modernized by couching it in more contemporary and persuasive arguments, drawn chiefly from social science and feminism. So the preeminent harm that pornography was said to cause was not sin and immorality but violence.

Conservatives have been gunning for the 1970 report of the President's Commission on Obscenity and Pornography, a major obstacle to their social agenda on sex, because that exhaustive review found no evidence that sexually explicit material caused antisocial behavior. The report recommended that restrictive laws governing adults' access to sexual materials be repealed and that the government undertake massive sex-education programs for adults and young people. The goal of the Meese commission was to overturn the 1970 panel's findings, and so it has. A mirror image, the Meese report finds that pornography causes harm—individual, social, moral and ethical. It recommends restrictive legal measures, but it declines to support sex-education programs. The conservative tenor and goals of the report can

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hardly be disguised. A drive against pornography may be the Administration's sop to conservative groups frustrated by their lack of total victory on abortion and school prayer—the social issue on which Reagan delivers.

Updating the Harms of Pornography

Conservatives found it harder than they expected to enlist social science in their cause. With $500,000, in contrast to the 1970 commission's $2 million (in 1967 dollars), the Meese commission was unable to fund any research and had but one part-time social scientist as a consultant. So it reviewed research conducted by other investigators. However, the staff either did not understand or else willfully ignored the nuances of social science research. Star witnesses Edward Donnerstein and Neil Malamuth, who have conducted many of the interesting new experiments on sexually explicit images, testified with care. Aggressive imagery and mainstream media are more worrisome than sexual imagery and X-rated channels, they said. Caution is required in interpreting the necessarily artificial laboratory findings to naturalistic settings and to populations other than college boys. Causal inference to actual behavior like rape is unwarranted. Not all the social science testimony was so disappointing. Dolf Zillmann, a communications researcher from Indiana University, testified that nonviolent images of consensual sex have negative effects, including greater acceptance of extramarital sex, and his collaborator, Jennings Bryant, thundered that when porn comes into your life, "forget trust, forget family, forget commitment, forget love, forget marriage!"

Social scientists on the commission became critical, particularly Judith Becker. She insisted that the panel use the customary term "negative effects" when describing social science results rather than the loaded term "harm," and she plainly stated, "There is no social science evidence linking pornography with violence."

When it became clear that social science would not provide the indictment of pornography that he wanted, Hudson announced that harm should be evaluated according to two additional tiers of evidence: "the totality of the evidence," which included victim testimony, anecdotal evidence, expert opinion, personal experience and common sense; and "moral, ethical and cultural values." Pornography could thus still be convicted on two out of three tiers.

Sears is candid in admitting that "much of the evidence that was considered was anecdotal." This signals an abrupt departure from standard practice in social science and public health research. By the 1950s it had become clear that scientific theories based on anecdotal report or even expert opinion were often unreliable and wrong, overturned by the results of more objective and standardized research methods. The mind boggles at what other anecdotal "findings" a carefully selected witness list might prove: working mothers are responsible for delinquency; abortion leads to nervous breakdown; white bread causes insanity.

The report's section on harms—written by Frederick Schauer—overstates the evidence, leaps to unsupported conclusions about what might be "reasonably assumed" in social science, cites no research to support statements and appears to misunderstand what causality means in social science. The panel's conclusion that violent pornography causes sexual violence, reached "unanimously and confidently," required "assumptions not found exclusively in the experimental evidence," Schauer wrote. "We see no reason, however, not to make these assumptions." The rules of evidence spelled out here are casual, not causal.

The commission fared much better in its attempt to coopt the language of antipornography feminists. One would think it was a difficult undertaking, since Hudson, Sears and the conservative cohort were no feminists. Hudson usually addressed female commissioners as "ladies." He transmuted the term used by women's antipornography groups, "the degradation of women," into "the degradation of femininity," which conjured up visions of Victorian womanhood dragged from the pedestal. Beyond language, conservatives consistently opposed proposals that feminists universally support—for sex education, for example.

However, witnesses provided by women's antipornography groups proved more useful than social scientists. They were eager to cast their personal experiences of incest, childhood sexual abuse, rape and sexual coercion in terms of the "harm" and "degradation" caused by pornography. Some were willing to understate, and most to omit mentioning, their support for those cranky feminist demands so offensive to conservative ears: abortion, birth control, lesbian and gay rights. Other feminist groups, including COYOTE, the U.S. Prostitutes Collective, the A.C.L.U. Women's Rights Project and the Feminist Anti Censorship Task Force (FACT, of which I am a member), criticized the panel's simple-minded attempt to link violence against women with sexual images and noted the irony of the Attorney General's concern for women at a time when the Administration has seriously cut back on women's programs. Protests were organized in conjunction with hearings in Los Angeles and New York.

The notion that pornography degrades women proved to be a particularly helpful unifying term, floating in and out of fundamentalist as well as antipornography feminist testimony. Speakers didn't notice, or chose not to, that the term "degradation" has very different meanings in each community. For antipornography feminists, pornography degrades women when it depicts or glorifies sexist sex: images that put men's pleasure first or indicate that women's lot in life is to serve men. For fundamentalists, degrading sexual images show sex outside marriage, including many behaviors considered acceptable, even desirable, by feminist thinkers, such as masturbation and egalitarian lesbian sex.

Although the commission happily assimilated the rhetoric of antipornography feminists, it decisively rejected their remedies. Conservative men pronounced the testimony of Andrea Dworkin "eloquent" and "moving" and insisted on including her remarks in the final report. But antipornography feminists had argued against obscenity laws and in favor of ordinances, such as those developed for Minneapolis and Indianapolis by Dworkin and Catharine MacKinnon, which outlaw pornography as a violation of

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women's civil rights [see Lois P. Sheinfeld, "Banning Porn: The New Censorship," *The Nation*, September 8, 1984]. The commission never seriously entertained the idea that obscenity laws should be repealed; given its conservative constituency and agenda, it couldn't have.

The report summarily dismisses Minneapolis-style ordinances, "properly held unconstitutional," because they infringe on speech protected under the First Amendment. But the panel cleverly, if disingenuously, argues that obscenity prosecutions against violent and degrading material are "largely consistent with what this ordinance attempts to do," ignoring the proponents' rejection of obscenity laws. They recommend that legislatures consider civil remedies against material that would be found obscene under current standards. This constitutes a major defeat for antipornography feminists. But unlike the loudly protesting social scientists—Donnerstein called the commission's conclusions bizarre—the antipornography feminists have not acknowledged the panel's distortion. They commend the panel for recognizing the harm of pornography and continue to denounce obscenity laws as "anti-woman, anti-gay, beside the point and ineffectual," without coming to grips with the panel's commitment to that approach.

Even more startling were MacKinnon and Dworkin's statements to the press that the commission "has recommended to Congress the civil rights legislation women have sought," and this comment by Dorchen Leidholdt, founder of Women Against Pornography: "I'm not embarrassed at being in agreement with Ed Meese." (She also supported the panel's efforts to publish Donald Wildmon's list of "businesses that traffic in pornography.") The only plausible explanation is that each group is strategizing how best to use the other. The Meese commission used feminist language to justify its conservative agenda, while antipornography feminist groups used the Meese commission to gain public recognition and legitimacy. It doesn't take more than a moment's reflection to see who came out on top.

The Definition

If orchestrating the new discourse was taxing, defining pornography was even harder. Having spent one year and a half-million dollars, the commission failed to define pornography. Two definitions came and went, one so broad that it included virtually all sexually explicit material. One critic joked, taking off from Justice Potter Stewart's remark, "Apparently they don't know it when they see it, but they don't want anybody to see it anyway."

The commissioners were unable to define pornography, but Jesuitical discussions that consumed two days of their Scottsdale, Arizona, business meeting produced a novel taxonomy that drew on the antipornography feminist vocabulary. Sexually explicit images, the panel decided, could be divided into four classes: violent (I), not violent but degrading (II), not violent and not degrading (III), not sexually explicit but portraying nudity (IV). Class I pornography was "an offense against humanity," whereas Class II was an offense to "profound human dignity."

A free-for-all erupted when commissioners specified what they meant by degrading sexual images. Nominations for Class II included oral sex, anal sex, group sex and masturbation. A discussion ensued on the concept of "homosexual degradation," which for some commissioners appeared to include any sexually explicit image of homosexuality. "Homosexual activity, contrary to appropriate purposes of human sexuality, is not a good thing," one panelist intoned.

Full-scale war broke out when the commissioners reached the category of nondegrading, nonviolent sexual images. The name itself is curious, suggesting an inability to characterize such images in a positive way. Moderates, citing the evidence from social science research, suggested that they cause little or no harm. For conservatives, anecdotal evidence and common sense proved that even these images were harmful. Moderates cringed at the unabashedly moralistic tone, but conservatives were apoplectic at the possibility that the commission might tell the American public that any sexually explicit image—heterosexual and homosexual, inside and outside marriage—is harmless.

The chair faced the prospect of a badly split vote. Commissioners could agree on virtually nothing about this class of material. Hudson decided to let each commissioner contribute an essay to the report expressing his or her personal view about Class III. But citizens will not have the same opportunity to make up their own minds if new obscenity laws sweep Class III material from the shelves and screens.

In the end the commission was unwilling to find any category of sexual images harmless. They even cast a dubious eye on nudity. It could be "dangerous" and "provocative," that is, provoke people to have sex. Statues like *David* and *Aphrodite* are great works of art, but imagine thousands of such statues lining a highway, one commissioner mused. It did give one pause.

Two important points emerge from this definitional swamp. First is the finding that all sexual images cause harm. On that one the conservatives won. The second is the invention of the category of violent pornography. This category is problematic, but moderates have accepted it as blindly as have conservatives. The reasons for this uncritical response are complex: a genuine concern about violence, particularly against women; a willingness to believe that depictions of violence or coercion in sexual images cause literal imitation; an ignorance and fear of sexually stigmatized behavior, particularly sadomasochism.

Underlying all this is our culture's confusion between sex and violence, attested to by the fact that it took the stop-rape movement ten years to educate the public that rape was an act of violence, not sex. But the confusion cuts both ways: if violence is misunderstood to be sex, sometimes sex is misunderstood to be violence.

What falls into the category of violent pornography? Some material is suggested by recent social psychology laboratory experiments on "aggressive" and "nonaggressive" sexually explicit materials. ("Violent pornography" is not a social science term.) The studies commonly use specially made shorts depicting a woman's rape: in one version she resists to the end; in the other she gives in

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and "enjoys" it. The negative attitudinal effects found with the second scenario—quite apart from questions of the duration of effects and generalizability—have been attributed to a much broader range of material. To indict pornography this broadening is necessary because the rape scenario appears in only a small fraction of commercial pornography. The commission's own content analysis of April 1986 top-selling pornographic magazines found an extraordinarily low rate of pictures showing "force, violence, or weapons": 0.6 percent, or 3 out of 512. This analysis and supporting data, which were included in early drafts, mysteriously disappeared from the final report.

But the commission used the term "violent pornography," defined as "actual or unmistakably simulated or unmistakably threatened violence presented in a sexually explicit fashion," to cover a wide range of other materials. Leading the pack was the snuff film, a movie in which a real woman is purportedly killed. The snuff film was the hearings' unicorn: much talked about, long searched for but never found. Legions of vice cops testified that an actual snuff film had never been identified, despite diligent investigations. Some R-rated Hollywood movies were also candidates for Class I. "Slice and dice" films such as *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* offer scenes of eroticized violence, but they are not pornography because they are not sexually explicit.

The remaining candidate for inclusion in this category, then, was sadomasochistic imagery, of which the commission saw a great deal and found deeply upsetting. During the course of their discussions, S&M migrated from the "degrading" to the "violent" class, more by a process of osmosis than decision. The commission called no witnesses to discuss the nature of S&M, either professional experts or typical participants. They ignored a small but increasing body of literature that documents important features of S&M sexual behavior, namely consent and safety. Typically, the conventions we use to decipher ordinary images are suspended when it comes to S&M images. When we see war movies, for example, we do not leave the theater believing that the carnage we saw was real or that the performers were injured making the films. But the commissioners assumed that images of domination and submission were both real and coerced.

The exceptional status of S&M images was heightened by testimony about coerced performances in any and all pornography, such as Linda Marchiano's account of how her husband abused her in the making of *Deep Throat*. Although coercion could exist in the making of any image—sexual or nonsexual, S&M or non-S&M—popular prejudice transformed concern about coercion into another indictment of S&M images. A critique of coercion should have focused on working conditions, not images. It helped that the images shown to the panelists were carefully selected so that the preponderance portrayed female submission and male dominance, thus framing sadomasochism in the context of gender inequality. Reverse images of male submission, common in the genre, or homosexual images, were rarely shown.

The Results

The most tangible results of the Meese commission's recommendations will be increased prosecutions under existing obscenity laws and the passage of new ones. Federal actions that require only administrative approval are likely to begin right away: appointment of special task forces and Justice Department directives to Federal prosecutors to increase enforcement. It is likely that new legislation will be passed at the Federal, state and local levels, following the commission's specific recommendations. Bills regulating telephones, computers and cable television are pending in Senate subcommittees; few legislators can afford to be "soft on porn" in an election year.

The report can be expected to generate a rash of state investigatory commissions and local hearings. Its recommendations to target "violent" and "degrading" material will be variously interpreted by prosecutors and judges in different localities, especially because the commissioners declined to provide clear and consistent examples. However, the target in most jurisdictions will probably be S&M images and gay and lesbian images. The commission did make a few recommendations for more social services for people who are involved in producing or consuming pornography. Ironically, these may well come to naught because of budgetary restraints.

The commission's endorsement of citizen action groups is significant because it extends the report's recommendations far beyond legally obscene materials to include materials that "some citizens may find dangerous or offensive or immoral." The report provides a detailed plan describing how citizens can canvass local bookstores and newsstands for offensive items, report to the police, monitor prosecutions and sentencing, and organize demonstrations and boycotts. The creation of a "network of sex spies," to use Barry Lynn's term, could prove more important than prosecution in making sexually explicit material unavailable in many areas of the country. Emboldened by the recent successes of the Rev. Jerry Falwell's boycotts, these groups may step beyond sexually explicit material to police other offensive images and texts.

Another legacy of the Meese commission must be seen in terms of what it failed to do. It only reluctantly approved of programs to educate schoolchildren about sexual abuse, for fear that this would be misread as an endorsement of sex education or an encouragement to children to make hysterical accusations against male relatives. It refused even to consider decriminalizing work in the sex industry and prostitution, preferring arrest and worsened working conditions for the participants, overwhelmingly female.

The most far-reaching and dangerous effect of the Meese commission's work may be its impact on judicial interpretation and application of obscenity laws. It is possible that the rhetoric about the harms of pornography—disseminated via simplistic headlines like "Pornography Breeds Violence, U.S. Panel Says"—may alter the cultural atmosphere in which judges and juries make necessarily subjective judgments about sexually explicit material. The commission's recommendations also contradict the assumptions of

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our legal system, which regulates bad actions rather than the books, speech or political theories that might arguably cause them. But Alan Sears inveighs against sexually related materials because they lead to "improper or bad attitudes." The genius of the Meese commission lies in its ability to make plausible in regard to sexual words and images a standard that is totally implausible in any other sphere.

The commission's chances of success—despite internal dissent, criticism by social scientists and widely publicized lawsuits by *Playboy* and *Penthouse*—remain high. The commission has with uncanny intuition gone to the heart of our culture's symbolic infrastructure about sex: sex degrades women; sex and violence are intimately linked, perhaps identical. To the extent that the commission has tapped fears usually expressed in conservative terms and has repackaged them in contemporary language, its findings will have appeal.

A total return to the sexual landscape of the 1950s is improbable. Too many changes have occurred in sex roles, families and sexual expression to permit the rollback conservatives have in mind. Yet sexual liberalization is enormously fragile, in part because it is so dependent on other social changes now under heavy assault from the right, in part because even progressives perceive sexuality as still too shameful and private an issue for which to mobilize a vigorous public defense. Some of us who have benefited from it believe that sexual modernization is not political, just personal. The right knows better. □

LETTERS.

(*Continued From Page 66*)

omy, primary and secondary jobs do not expand proportionately. Rather . . . there are shifts to high-productivity, high-wage industries and jobs, or job upgrading. . . . These shifts result in a disproportionate increase in the employment of women and minorities in these industries. . . . if the unemployment rate fell from five to four percent, women and youth would get most of the jobs . . . blacks would increase their relative status as well.

In addition to the direct benefits of increased access to primary jobs, there are positive effects in the secondary labor market. As workers in secondary jobs leave to take primary jobs, firms with secondary jobs are forced to raise wages to attract workers, and the wage differential between the two types of jobs falls. Because women and minorities are overrepresented in secondary jobs this results in diminished gender and race inequality. The evidence is rather consistent on the narrowing of income differentials in expansions and [their] widening in recessions. So there is strong evidence that full employment is particularly beneficial for women and minorities.

One last caveat: there is no question, as Block et al. indicate, that the American people have resisted cutbacks in the welfare state. Indeed, poll after poll indicates their support for New Deal programs. However, I question whether this support could easily be transformed into a significant expansion of welfare services—unless it was joined with a revenue-producing, growth-oriented jobs policy—together with military cutbacks and increased taxes.

Thus, it seems clear that a jobs-oriented strategy is not only critical for the expansion of the welfare state; it carries with it many other significant benefits. A meaningful jobs strategy must be linked with an economic-growth strategy that will benefit the entire society and that has the potential for gaining mass support. *Frank Riessman, Editor*
Social Policy

BLOCK, CLOWARD, EHRENREICH AND PIVEN REPLY

New York City

Although we are not in principle opposed to full employment, we do differ sharply on the pragmatic political question of whether it can be achieved in the United States, except perhaps in the event of war. In our opinion, advocates of full employment have not advanced a concrete political strategy with a whisper of potential success. Instead, they keep hoisting full-employment banners, as if proclaiming that the goal itself were equivalent to a hardheaded strategy. But so far even the unemployed have failed to rally behind their banner. Where is the potential majority movement for full employment? Why is it ready to be mobilized? And precisely what kind of political action could it undertake? Unless these questions can be answered, full-employment advocates have a slogan, not a political program.

By insisting on the priority of a goal they have no strategy for winning, full-employment advocates divert energy and resources from struggles they might win. That brings us to another disagreement. At the present time the social programs that enable the unemployable and unemployed to maintain a minimum level of survival are under attack. As we said in our article, these programs represent great human achievements, won by working-class struggles in the 1930s and 1960s, for they afford some protection against the insecurities of a market economy. Since Reagan's first election corporate America and the right have shown an unflagging determination to roll back these programs. Thus far it is the unemployed who have been hurt most. As a result of punitive changes proposed by Reagan and enacted by Congress, the proportion of the unemployed receiving unemployment benefits has fallen to one-third, the lowest since the program was initiated, in the 1930s. So the left posture in this period is paradoxical: even as it calls for full employment, it has abandoned those who are actually unemployed or unemployable to fend for themselves. By failing to organize a defense of the social programs, and instead calling for full employment, the left will lose both ways. There will be neither full employment nor decent social protections.

Finally, the left's celebration of full employment seems to us altogether too indiscriminate. All this rhetoric about jobs as the key to the flowering of human potential is a bit much. There's nothing particularly ennobling about making cigarettes, or serving fast food, or about most wage work. Indeed, in an economy whose principal means of generating new politically subsidized jobs is through escalating weapons production, the unqualified demand for full employment can even be dangerous. Meanwhile, the real value of the minimum wage has remained at about two-thirds of the poverty level for twenty years: a family of four with a full-time, fifty-two-weeks-a-year wage earner grosses less than $7,000, or about $4,000 less than the poverty-line wage.

It is not responsive to these criticisms to argue that the left supports full employment only with decent jobs at decent wages producing useful goods, and so on. If there isn't a realistic chance of obtaining full employment even on capital's terms, what is served by these even more politically unrealistic qualifications, except perhaps our own satisfaction in knowing that we are pure and steadfast in adhering to a politically correct line? And even on that point there is cause for debate. It ought to be remembered that full employment is wage labor, not emancipation, and it should be treated with a little less enthusiasm by the left. *Fred Block*
Richard A. Cloward
Barbara Ehrenreich
Frances Fox Piven

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Horse-Trading in Female Ecstasy

BARBARA PROBST
SOLOMON

DEAR DIEGO. *By Elena Poniatowska. Translated by Katherine Silver. Pantheon. 87 pp. $10.95.*

To appreciate what the gifted Mexican novelist Elena Poniatowska is up to in her extraordinary novella, *Dear Diego*, helps to know an earlier classic, *Ifegenia: The Diary of a Young Girl Who Was Bored*, written in the early 1920s by the Venezuelan novelist Teresa de la Parra. In *Ifegenia*, which has never been translated into English, de la Parra examines the psychological and sexual state of a liberated Venezuelan woman just after her return from post-World War I Paris. Although Paris in the 1920s was full of North Americans, European culture didn't dominate them in quite the same way it did Latin American expatriates. In addition to the tango, wealthy Argentineans transported their cows to France so they could drink milk from the pampas while imbibing European culture. Their difficulties began when they had to return home to a far more stultifying society.

In her novel about one female exile's return, de la Parra leapt past the perennial feminist theme—a woman in search of herself—and established her character as already liberated and sophisticated. Ifegenia bobbed her hair, lived the bohemian life in Paris and learned to regard both sexual pleasure and intelligent conversation as her right. Using the technique of letters and diaries, de la Parra conveys the intensity of Ifegenia's rebellious voice, the range of her intelligence and the degree of her sexual obsessiveness. But de la Parra also anticipates Simone de Beauvoir's warning that brains and sexual liberation don't matter at all without a firm economic base. Sacrificed by her adored lover, who marries a woman with money, Ifegenia must also make a loveless bourgeois marriage in order to survive.

Barbara Probst Solomon's novels include The Beat of Life, Arriving Where We Started *and* Short Flights.

Elena Poniatowska's *Dear Diego*, set during the same period and reminiscent of de la Parra's *Ifegenia*, is about a heated *ménage à trois* between Diego Rivera, his Russian émigré common-law wife, Angelina Beloff, and the jealous third lover, art itself. Poniatowska's narrative—also a series of letters—blends real documents with her own imaginative reconstruction of Angelina Beloff's relation to Diego Rivera. Exactly how much of this is Poniatowska and how much is drawn from actual documents is not made clear, and since Rivera was a real person, the reader can't help filling the gaps in this impressionistic novella with what is already known about him. But whatever the proportion of fact to fiction, the novella is appealing because Poniatowska is so good at capturing the sadness of third-rate French hotels, the wet Paris fog and the *cafard* so familiar to bohemians long on soul and short on cash.

Sent to Paris to study at age 20, Diego Rivera stayed fourteen years, living the last ten with Angelina. He was a part of the group which included Picasso, Gertrude Stein, Guillaume Apollinaire, Élie Faure, Diaghilev and Ilya Ehrenburg. Angelina's letters start in 1921, just after Rivera abandoned both her and the Parisian art world. In *Dear Diego* he emerges as a real character, albeit a voiceless one. The reader senses Angelina's suspicion that Rivera's abandonment of Europe was caused by traumatic disappointment as well as practical advantage. Did she also suspect that he thought his Cubist work inferior to that of his friend Picasso? Certainly his decision that he needed neither the romantic Russian soul of Angelina Beloff nor the world of French Modernism was abrupt. In his next phase Rivera became his country's chief social realist, celebrating both Mexico's newfound national identity—*Mexicanidad*—and his artistic one.

Angelina's complex reaction to his total rejection provides Poniatowska with the true subject of *Dear Diego*, the psychology of female ecstasy. Angelina's ecstatic obsession with Diego is capable of being interrupted only by her obsessions about other lost love objects. She constantly resurrects vivid memories of her adolescent trancelike adoration of the Russian Orthodox Church; even more significant, she turns normal mourning for the tragic death of her and Diego's infant son into an almost romantic obsession with grieving itself. The only form of ecstasy that she uses to release her (somewhat) from Diego is her desire to lose herself in her art. During the course of the novella Angelina shuttles back and forth between these competing passions. She reaches a high of sorts whenever they induce in her a fervid state of self-abnegation, often accompanied by extreme loneliness, hunger and cold.

Like Teresa de la Parra's heroine, Ifegenia, Angelina Beloff was an uncommonly liberated and intelligent woman. But like many bohemian women of her time she tried to "upgrade" her sex life from the simply carnal to the classier state of "free love" by infusing herself with soul and her lover with talent. I think that like many such women she secretly hoped that all that soul would bind her man to her in a union even more lasting than ordinary marriage. The romantic notion that a woman can liberate herself without economic underpinnings has proved every bit as dangerous as Isadora Duncan's romantic solution to the inhibitions of clothing; ironically, she died choked by her own diaphanous scarf. Women's magazines have often preferred to publicize women with a fondness for the sensational—women who have undermined the traditional domestic roles of their sex by pushing charismatic ecstasy in the form of artistic self-discovery, multiple orgasm, group euphoria and the like. That these magazines were able to get away with the startling omission of economics meant that they became fabulous horse-traders in female ecstacy.

Angelina felt she had sacrificed herself in order to nurture a genius and she was devastated when he broke their unwritten bargain and dumped her. In the first letter Angelina attempts to immolate herself: her talent, her sketches are nothing. Then she switches tactics and slyly insinuates that their Paris friends consider Diego a rat for leaving. Her trump card, her blackmail, is the argument that by deserting her, Rivera is also deserting what she sees as his

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"Art"—the formidable third member of their original trio.

Poniatowska's tone is perfect:

> I love you, Diego, right now I have an almost unbearable pain in my chest. In the street, there are moments when I am suddenly struck by your memory and then I can't walk and I feel so afflicted that I have to lean against a wall. The other day a policeman came up to me: "Madame, vous êtes malade?" I shook my head and was about to answer that it was love, you see I am Russian, I am sentimental and I am a woman, but then I realized that my accent would give me away and French functionaries don't like foreigners.

Angelina's attachment to Diego is so great that in her trancelike states she becomes him: "For the first time in four long years I feel that you are not far away, I am so full of you—that is, of painting. I plan to return to the Louvre in the next few days." Through her feverish painting Angelina believes herself possessed by Diego. She describes him as being inside her: she swells up, her breasts become engorged, she feels Diego on top of her. When not indulging in sexual imagery in her letters to him, she incessantly recalls the image of their dead son. At other moments, she conjures up her dreamscape (another version of him), Mexico.

Angelina uses every device to let Rivera know that she is, in the eyes of their friends, becoming pale with the sickness of love. She tells him that during a Russian Easter celebration in Paris, a fellow Russian takes pity on her poverty and her hunger, and gives her a Russian hard-boiled egg. Finally, braced up by memories of religious celebrations during her Russian Orthodox childhood, she begins to retrieve her sense of identity. With filial pride she reminds Diego of her excellent bourgeois liberal-radical parents. She shakes herself loose from him and asks her first coherent question: "Does my love now have an object?"

As Angelina regains her strength, she recognizes that she has lost Diego. She then describes to him a scene in which her current teacher, the artist André Lhote, in front of many students, pronounced the magic words to her: "You have an extraordinary talent." She thus obtains permission from another powerful male to become an artist. She has also come to accept Rivera's power in the world outside Paris. In a new tone she writes to him: "Juan Gris is going to Mexico and he is counting on you for help." And she adds that Élie Faure has said that Europe has dried up: the bohemians miss Rivera's fables about plumed serpents flying through the skies. Rivera never answers her letters, but he does send money. In a real-life postscript t this book it is noted that Angelir Beloff's Mexican and European arti friends helped her to visit Mexico i 1935. Diego Rivera walked by her in theater lobby without noticing her, an she chose not to intrude on him. [

The Small Time

STUART KLAWANS

Here begins a new, occasional column on small-press writing, undertaken with *The Nation*'s traditional belief that there must be somebody out there who cares. For all who have felt, once too often, the pall of normality drop over them mid-sentence in some well-crafted fiction—well-crafted meaning you're supposed to fall to your knees before the author's choice of adjectives—this column will offer a guide to writing that is ill-crafted enough to let in fresh air through its mismatched planks. Works of gemlike perfection will also qualify for discussion, provided they are so odd as to defy any publisher's hope of profit.

As for the sort of writing I will not cover, let me plunge in by quoting Gilbert Sorrentino in the Spring 1986 issue of *The Review of Contemporary Fiction* (1817 Seventy-ninth Avenue, Elmwood Park, IL 60635). Sorrentino refers to the time when "all hell busted loose! Literary historians agree that the debacle was caused by 'the short story.' A few have been preserved as cautionary devices at which the curious gape with a mixture of horror and loathing." I'll come back to Sorrentino shortly. First, some remarks on a few of the better pieces in the same *Review*, starting with Wallace Markfield's "Unmaking It," a section of a novel in progress titled *Radical Surgery*.

Markfield's piece is a delightfully accurate account of the career of a 1960s radical academic, Brian Jerome Dworkin. "His first futile gesture of defiance" occurred in 1956 at his bar mitzvah party in Brooklyn's Marine Parkway Jewish Community Center, "when he slapped a $200 gift check out of his Uncle Leon's hand and stridently denounced him to all present as Brownsville's worst slumlord, as a capitalist cockroach bloated on the blood that ra from his rat-bitten Puerto Rican te ants." From here Dworkin progres to the English department of Brookl College, where he composes a progra to dispel "apocalyptic anomie" converting all missile silos into Reic ian Joyatoriums, setting aside a da when all Americans might "beg fo giveness for their feigned innocence, and "printing, at government expens millions of bumper stickers readir 'Fuck Hate!'" Dworkin sends a cop of his plan to President Kennedy an receives an invitation to the Wh House. Later, an impromptu speech at SNCC convention brings him nationa attention: "Fatigued by the endles bureaucratic discourse during the oper ing session, he took the floor an mischievously proposed a Screamatho Day, when blacks throughout the worl would utter roars of bloody murde against their condition." Chet Huntley takes the speech seriously, and soor Dworkin is debating Bill Buckley and writing parodies of L.B.J.'s speeches for *Ramparts*. The story ends in November 1972, when Dworkin, pursued by Nixon's lackeys, flees the country with his Native American wife and their little daughter, Emma Goldman Luxemburg Threethorns.

Nixon also figures prominently in a somewhat more unhinged story in the *Review*, a section of Kathy Acker's forthcoming novel, *Don Quixote in America, the Land of Freedom*. Don Quixote is a woman; everybody else is a dog (since it's a dog-eat-dog society). The excerpt begins with Don Quixote's complaint against her Manhattan landlord, a successful artist with leftist ideals, who is gouging all the tenants. That's America for you. This topic soon gives way, through a transition I couldn't possibly explain, to a colloquy between Nixon and the Angel of Death. Nixon is copulating with Pat. The Angel of Death is apparently Thomas Hobbes. (I hope I've got this right.) Nixon defends himself against the Angel's ranting with

Stuart Klawans will be writing regularly about small presses.

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the declaration, "This is America, disgrace of the West, slave-manufacturer in the void of two oceans."

This issue of the *Review* also features a characteristically surprising work by Harry Mathews. As usual, the piece seems too artificial, too hermetic, to be at all moving. As usual, it's every bit as touching as it is clever. Imagine a fragmentary sequence of medieval Armenian poems, narrating a tale with no correspondence to any event in history or legend, written by an anonymous poet in a bafflingly unique style. Imagine as well that the manuscript has vanished. The poems now exist only in an outrageously unfaithful nineteenth-century Italian translation. What follows, Mathews explains with a straight face, is an attempt to reconstruct the original, unknowable poems in English, and to evoke the character of the unknowable poet. Can I describe the result? Try describing the taste of a mango.

As for Gilbert Sorrentino's "Two Mose Bankes," which I've already mentioned, it is a travesty of society-page chatter and other high-toned nonsense, a string of artfully mangled clichés and non sequiturs:

> Lady Harlan threw everything over and boarded her favorite luxury liner with her "little Hungarian," Count Janos something-or-other. Pity his mother had ordered his tubes tied after the Cracow affair with a band of traveling goodwill ambassadors. Still, her collection of Impressionists was dazzling, if banal.

I find a little of this goes a long way. Still, it is not a short story.

At the risk of losing my New York residency permit, I will admit that the best writing I've seen recently in small-press magazines is in *Zyzzyva* (55 Sutter Street, Suite 400, San Francisco, CA 94104), a journal devoted to West Coast writers and artists. The Spring 1986 issue features a chapter, "The Blind," from a novel in progress by Arturo Islas about a middle-class Mexican-American family living just on the U.S. side of the border. Written in a style much closer to Joyce's scrupulous meanness than to Latin magic realism, the story resolves into an interplay between the recently widowed Jesus Maria and her nephew Miguel Chico (a university professor, like Islas himself). But a lot happens before the shape of the piece becomes plain. The family gathers for midnight mass. Half a dozen family portraits are

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sketched. Desperate people steal the parish's supposedly miraculous statue of St. Lucia, twice. The ghost of Jesus Maria's husband comes back—at least Jesus Maria feels for a moment as if it has—and Miguel Chico declares his appreciation for Dolly Parton. "She's like a female Liberace," Jesus Maria replies.

Also in the Spring *Zyzzyva*: Sara Vogan's "The Strength of Steel," a story about a girl growing up in a succession of steel-mill towns with her increasingly hopeless mother, her pliable sister and her colorblind father, whose greatest ambition is to live in Pittsburgh. From Pete Najarian comes a series of dialogues, "Daughters of Memory," in which elderly Armenian women comment on things in general. From Edward Abbey comes the first chapter of his new novel, *Confessions of the Barbarian*, by all evidence a rather unbuttoned post-divorce piece. The present section offers us the narrator, newly abandoned by his wife, shooting his refrigerator to death with a .357 magnum.

The Summer 1986 *Zyzzyva* also contains some good fiction—I particularly liked Kevin Killian's "Loveland," a gay man's memoir of adolescence, when "I was a homosexual primitive like a Frida Kahlo mural the Feds tear down"—but the most notable entry is an excerpt from *Dragons at War*, Daniel Bolger's account of Army training exercises at Fort Irwin, California. Bolger is an infantry officer headed for the West Point faculty. He participated as a company commander in the maneuvers he describes. His politics are what you'd expect—and that's what makes his writing so valuable. Here is an articulate Army man explaining just what the more advanced Pentagon thinkers have in mind, particularly when they talk about "preparedness." After Vietnam, Bolger writes, "the Americans had to get their heads out of the jungle and back into the big leagues of Europe. . . . By 1979 . . . everyone had to learn how to fight the Soviets." Bolger goes into detail as to how the soldiers learn their lessons in "digging huge ditches, blowing up demolitions, tearing new tank trails, firing heavy artillery, coordinating attack helicopters," providing close air support, and losing their fear of atomic artillery shells and nuclear land mines—or, as the Army prefers to call them, "government-classified high explosives."

On that note, one may appropriately turn to *Exquisite Corpse*, the almost classicist avant-garde monthly put out by Andrei Codrescu at the English department of Louisiana State University (Baton Rouge, LA 70803). In the May–August issue, among book reviews, eccentric and overwrought letters, a diatribe against the Library of America edition of Whitman and reports from friends in Princeton, Copenhagen, San Francisco and Grenada, Mississippi, one may find "Eight Ruins" by Michael Stephens. The subject is the South Bronx, more or less:

> Perfume of floured chicken in pungent oil, malta y cerveza, neon blink of CARNES POLLO FRITO FRUTAS Y VEGETALES. The stripped-down hulks of cars line the street under the el, OSCAR 167 written on a few of them, and a grandma with the face of Mother Teresa parades a bunch of children the size of chihuahuas, Consuela's Tropical Lounge, a Ninja movie at the Art, this boulevard of empty buildings, ruins, lots of brick and glassine bags with its low center of gravity, its left hooks, its banana skins and congas.

That's the South Bronx, more. The South Bronx, less, goes: "Shapes fall and rise in the shadows, and move toward the Chamber of Desire, stopping to drink from the River of Life, watching the House of Longing Dreams on the other side. Into the Garden of Falling Bricks. . . ." You get the idea. For a somewhat more down-to-earth read, I recommend Deborah Salazar's "The Corpse Story," in which a Mrs. Hernandez recounts, for the nth time, her daughters' favorite tale, about how the first naked man she ever saw was an anatomy course cadaver.

The Spring 1986 *Frank* (6, rue Monge, 75005 Paris) contains an excerpt from *Carpenter's Apprentice* by Winfried F. Weiss, a memoir of displaced persons passing through the narrator's mother's apartment in Germany after World War II. The issue also features translations of work by Claude Simon and Henri Michaux and a dossier on contemporary Turkish writing and art. A rather uneven issue of *The Portable Lower East Side* (463 West Street, #344, New York, NY 10014), for Winter/Summer 1986, focuses on Eastern European writing from Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and New York City. Some of the selections are excerpts from addresses to the 1986 International PEN

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Congress. If you missed George Konrád's and Ryszard Kapuscinski's comments on that occasion, here's your chance to catch up. The most notable story in the issue is Ivan Klíma's "Myriam," which testifies to the persistence of puppy love even in the Prague ghetto. *Apocalypso* #2, a publication for old-style hipsters (or at least for people who want to be like them), does not quite live down to its ideals, but it does contain one page worth saving: a text drawing by Mathew Finch that has as its main element a sentence diagram of one of Ronald Reagan's press conference utterances. If you feel you must own a copy, try your bookstore or write to *Apocalypso* (673 Ninth Avenue, New York, NY 10036).

Coming soon: a review of a full-length novel, which a daring soul published out of his living room. Until then, please help keep the small time alive. Talk about it with your friends, and mail me review copies, samples, catalogues and your comments. I don't guarantee reviews, or even replies. But my motto, which might serve for the entire small time as well, is: I'll read anything. □

The Next-to-Last Word

DOROTHY GALLAGHER

SACCO AND VANZETTI: The Case Resolved. *By Francis Russell. Harper & Row. 246 pp. $16.95.*

POSTMORTEM: New Evidence in the Case of Sacco and Vanzetti. *By William Young and David E. Kaiser. University of Massachusetts Press. 188 pp. $20. Paper $9.95.*

Consider for a moment the Triangle Shirtwaist fire. It has been seventy-five years since those women leaped to their deaths, adding their weight to the evidence against capitalism, their souls to the class struggle. Have you thought about it? Well, put a cork in it. After years of research into the event I have come upon evidence for my belief that the fire was set by the women themselves as an insurance scam to fund their radical activities. Yes, it is true, as the radical-liberal dogmatists charged, that for years I had no conclusive proof of my thesis. But at last I am vindicated! In my hand is a document . . .

So, in effect, speaks Francis Russell in presenting his new book on the Sacco and Vanzetti case. I will discuss his document in a moment. But since certain facts are again at issue it may help to review the case briefly. On April 15, 1920, a robbery took place in South Braintree, Massachusetts. In the course of stealing a $15,000 payroll, the robbers shot and killed the paymaster and his guard.

Three weeks later Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were arrested for the crime on a policeman's hunch that anarchists were responsible. Neither man was told the reason for his arrest until many hours had passed, and while being questioned by police they both lied about their associates, about the guns they carried and about their errand on the night of their arrest. Two trials followed. In the first of these Vanzetti was accused of participating in a failed holdup in Bridgewater, Massachusetts, on December 24, 1919. He was prosecuted by Frederick Katzmann and sentenced by Judge Webster Thayer; Katzmann and Thayer also acted in those capacities at the second trial.

That second trial, the celebrated trial of Sacco and Vanzetti for the South Braintree crimes, began on May 31, 1921, and lasted six weeks. The prosecution presented eyewitnesses and ballistics experts to connect the two men with the crime. The defense presented alibi witnesses and its own ballistics experts, who contradicted the prosecution. The jury found Sacco and Vanzetti guilty, and thus began their seven-year ordeal.

During the years between arrest and execution, the case became an international cause. Defenders of Sacco and Vanzetti believed that the judge was deeply prejudiced against the anarchists and that the jury was influenced by both his prejudice and the patriotic hysteria that began with World War I and culminated in the Red scare of 1919-20. During that time also, a rumor circulated among some anarchist partisans to the effect that Sacco was indeed guilty.

In the 1950s, Francis Russell decided to write the book that would finally vindicate Sacco and Vanzetti. But as he worked away at *Tragedy in Dedham*

Dorothy Gallagher, the author of Hannah's Daughters *(T. Y. Crowell), has completed a biography of Carlo Tresca.*

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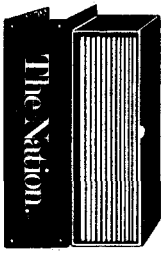

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(published in 1962) he came upon this rumor of Sacco's guilt. He began to think that it explained Sacco and Vanzetti's lies at their arrest and at their trial. Russell learned that Fred Moore, the primary defense lawyer during the first four years of the case, had expressed doubts about his clients' innocence after he had been fired. Russell was even more disturbed, he says, when he learned that the prominent Italian-American anarchist Carlo Tresca had also insisted years later that Sacco was guilty. He tells us that Tresca's pronouncement was "the turning point" for him.

Fair enough. In *Tragedy in Dedham*, Russell raised these questions and advised readers of his change of heart. He didn't claim that he had proof of guilt and acknowledged that much of his new evidence was hearsay. But as time passed a mysterious alchemy occurred. Russell's doubts turned to certainties; those who remained unconvinced by his arguments no longer held honest opinions but were "dogmatists" with a radical agenda. This is a familiar sea change among revisionists. In this case it does more damage to Russell's reputation than it does to the reputation of Sacco or Vanzetti.

The justification for *The Case Resolved* is a letter that reached Russell in 1982. It was written by one Ideale Gambera, who introduced himself as the son of Giovanni Gambera, lately deceased. Gambera wrote that Russell was correct in inferring Sacco's guilt:

> Everyone [in the Boston anarchist circle] knew that Sacco was guilty and that Vanzetti was innocent as far as the actual participation in the killing. But no one would ever break the code of silence. . . . My father was with the case from its beginnings but is never mentioned simply because that is the way he wished it.

This letter (to which Russell has added the material in brackets) also contained what Russell claims are "corroborative" details: that Giovanni Gambera was an original member of the defense committee formed by the anarchists immediately after the arrest of Sacco and Vanzetti; that the District Attorney, Katzmann, offered to fix the case for a bribe of $35,000; that the defense attorney, Fred Moore, was a cocaine addict; that Aldino Felicani, treasurer of the defense committee, was very tall for a Sicilian. "It was indeed the last word," Russell writes of this letter. "Now the silence had given way to a voice from beyond the grave. . . . Gambera the ultimate insider knew. Only someone within the closed anarchist circle could have written a letter with such corroborative details."

Let me be kind and call Russell a dreamer. With one eye open he might have considered it strange that after his twenty-odd years of research he had not turned up so central a figure as Gambera. He would not have characterized the admittedly garbled story of Katzmann's bribe as a "left-handed confirmation" of the incident. He would have remembered that Fred Moore's erratic behavior was well known and that Aldino Felicani long ago speculated that Moore was addicted to morphine. And while the "closed anarchist circle" surely knew that Felicani was tall for a Sicilian, a perceptive Republican might have noticed it as well.

Not long after receiving this letter, Russell flew to California to meet with his informant and inspect the "memoir" that Giovanni Gambera had written shortly before his death. It turns out that this document consists of a few dozen pages with no mention of Sacco's guilt. Russell reproduces bits of this memoir but a reader would be forgiven for wondering why, in a book so short on documentation, the author did not quote all of it. Unless, perhaps, it does not support his case. No doubt Giovanni Gambera was in some way involved in the case; no doubt he confided in his wife and son that he believed Sacco guilty. But what does that amount to but the same rumor that has been repeated over the decades?

For another view try *Postmortem: New Evidence in the Case of Sacco and Vanzetti.* There is new evidence here, as the authors advertise, and also a reconstruction that is very suggestive. First of all, however, David Kaiser and the late William Young remind us that more than 75 percent of the eyewitnesses at the robbery denied having seen Sacco and Vanzetti. The authors also provide minutes of the grand jury testimony to show how a number of witnesses who testified against them were badgered into doing so by the District Attorney.

As for the contemporaneous rumor of Sacco's guilt, it very likely had its source in Fred Moore. Moore and the anarchist defense committee were at odds from the beginning of the case. Sacco came to hate Moore as they quarreled over tactics, and matters came to a head in 1924, when Moore was fired from the case. He was devastated by his removal. Sometime later he told Upton Sinclair that he suspected that Sacco was guilty, adding that he had no proof and that neither of his clients had suggested such a thing.

But what of Carlo Tresca's pronouncements on Sacco's guilt? At the time he was writing *Tragedy in Dedham*, Russell believed that if anyone was in a position to know the truth about the matter, it was Tresca. But, as it turns out, Russell knew very little about the Italian anarchist movement when he wrote *Tragedy*. He has since been informed by the work of Nunzio Pernicone, a scholar of the movement, and has realized that in view of the virulent internecine battles between anarchist groups, there was nothing necessary about Tresca's knowledge. Tresca might have known; he might have chosen to believe the rumor. Deprived of Tresca's certain knowledge, Russell has found another fount in Giovanni Gambera. He fits the pieces together in a neat fantasy: Gambera, in 1941, is about to move from Massachusetts to California. Tresca, his dear old comrade, pays him a final visit. The impending separation leads Gambera to break the code of silence and confide his knowledge to Tresca, never mind that the anarchist group to which Gambera belonged considered Tresca a traitor and a police spy. Very nice. Only no one

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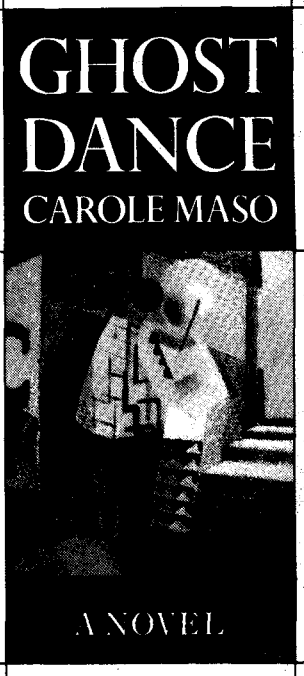
knows anything about such a meeting. Gambera happened not to mention it to his son, though no doubt Russell pressed Ideale on this point.

It is on the ballistic evidence that Russell places the greatest weight. Although the technology was primitive in 1921, by 1927 the comparison microscope was in use, and in tests made in that year and again in 1935, 1961 and 1983, it was shown that one bullet taken from the body of the dying payroll guard had been fired from Sacco's Colt pistol. Recent defenders of Sacco and Vanzetti, Russell says, have gone to "byzantine lengths" to demonstrate that the bullet offered in evidence was a later substitution.

To discover to what byzantine lengths "dogmatists" will go for the sake of the cause, I turn again to *Postmortem*. Its authors agree that the bullet in question was fired from Sacco's gun. They then reconstruct the shootings from eyewitness testimony and from the evidence of the autopsies. And they argue persuasively that the same assailant must have fired all of the four bullets recovered from the body of the guard, Beradelli. If they are right, the one bullet offered in evidence against Sacco could not have come from Beradelli's body. They argue that it must have been fired from Sacco's gun by one or another of the authorities sometime before his trial, and substituted for one of the bullets recovered. To bolster this point *Postmortem* turns to the minutes of the grand jury to show that District Attorney Katzmann seemed to believe then that all the bullets had indeed come from the same gun. (This may be why, as Russell relates—though not with this particular interpretation in mind—Katzmann proposed to the defense, before the trial, that neither side should offer ballistic evidence.)

The material presented in *Postmortem* is substantial, though no doubt open to other interpretations; the Gambera letter of *The Case Resolved* is hearsay, and no amount of shouting can transform it. Russell has given us a prosecutor's brief dressed up in scholar's robes. It is a shabby job of work: as he has it, all Sacco's alibi witnesses lied; all the prosecution's witnesses told the truth; the judge and the prosecutor were honorable men; the defense, suspect; the Red scare played no part in the atmosphere of the trial. And Russell insists on this against the evidence of the historical record. More than that,



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against his own record. In *Tragedy in Dedham*, which remains a valuable book, Russell reported that he asked Sacco's comrade Aldino Felicani whether Sacco was the type of man who might have been involved in the anarchist bombings of 1919. Felicani agreed that in certain circumstances Sacco might have been. Then, answering the real thrust of Russell's question, he added, "But a holdup murder, to kill innocent men like that? It is quite impossible." In *The Case Resolved*, Felicani, though dead, is made to answer a different question: whether in certain circumstances Sacco or Vanzetti could have killed. "'Sacco could,' he said. . . . Then as if he had given something away he added quickly, 'But of course Sacco never did.'"

Having embraced the cause of Sacco's guilt, ambiguity is intolerable to Russell. Maybe Sacco was guilty, but not on the word of this revisionist, who revises even his own evidence. □

MUSIC.

DAVID HAMILTON

Taverner: Missa Gloria tibi Trinitas. The Tallis Scholars, directed by Peter Phillips. Gimell CDGIM-004 (CD). The Sixteen, conducted by Harry Christophers. Hyperion A-66134 (LP).

Monteverdi: Orfeo. Chiaroscuro, directed by Nigel Rogers; London Baroque, directed by Charles Medlam; London Cornett & Sackbut Ensemble, directed by Theresa Caudle. EMI CDCB-47141 (two CDs).

Bach: Mass in B minor. Soloists, Taverner Consort, Taverner Players, directed by Andrew Parrott. EMI CDCB-47292 (two CDs).

Handel: Solomon. Soloists, Monteverdi Choir, English Baroque Soloists, conducted by John Eliot Gardiner. Philips 412-612-1 (three LPs).

"Original instruments" were the opening wedge of the 1960s and 1970s revolution in early-music performance, from the late David Munrow in medieval music to Nikolaus Harnoncourt in the eighteenth century. Since the bulk of those centuries' music was vocal, singing has inevitably undergone revaluation as well. To be sure, the most characteristic "original instrument" of the Baroque, the castrato, has been unavailable since the last survivor of that barbarous custom retired early in the present century (none too soon, to judge from his recordings, reissued in Opal 823 and ghoulishly fascinating). But even two decades ago, singers such as the remarkable Jantina Noorman were looking behind the firmly ensconced bel canto tonal and technical model at various vernacular procedures and at possibilities suggested by the pungent, unupholstered timbres of old instruments.

Early vocal music, like its instrumental counterpart, offers performers the attraction of a tabula rasa, and more. Musical scholarship in the area known as "performance practice" has in some ways proved liberating, whittling away at nineteenth-century assumptions about the integrity and specificity of musical works. The conception of a single "correct" performance is actually relatively modern—and, in any case, not even all the resources of historical musicology can recover sounds and timbres and unwritable nuances. Rather than bewailing this shortfall of knowledge, musicians have learned to revel in it. Medieval song, for example, once cautiously "reconstructed," now serves as a starting point for vigorous, absorbing improvisations by Andrea von Ramm, Esther Lamandier and Martin Best.

Even with music of later centuries, there remains considerable room for creativity, as one quickly learns when following one scholar-performer's recording with another's printed edition of the same work. This latitude may in itself attract the gifted, adventurous performer, as an alternative to the standard literature with its accumulated weight of tradition and its audiences who listen either too little (demanding only familiarity) or too intently (making comparisons with Toscanini or Schnabel recordings at every phrase). And in addition there are the challenges of rediscovering (or perhaps inventing) techniques and their musical potential, and of exploring even familiar works in the fresh terms thus defined.

The recordings listed above are a small sample of current output. All were recorded in London, currently the world capital of early music. Despite the variety of group names, all have personnel in common, save perhaps The Sixteen, whose members are unidentified. The level of tonal perfection in choral singing attained by both groups in Taverner's substantial (35 to 40 minutes), richly scored, abstractly rhapsodic Missa Gloria tibi Trinitas is remarkable, yet neither has solved all the challenges. The Sixteen are the more secure and polished, especially the amazing sopranos who ascend fearlessly to top B-flat, yet the singing is stiffly metrical. With the Tallis Scholars, who aren't quite as comfortable at altitudes (even though they sing a semitone lower), each voice part makes its own meter, realizing the complexity and richness of the mass's texture as a sum of metrically independent lines; alas, the recorded sound obscures some polyphonic detail (a result in itself perhaps "authentic," but not usefully so).

The strongest point of Nigel Rogers's recording of the first great opera, Monteverdi's *Orfeo* of 1607, is his own assumption of the title role—self-consciously virtuosic in manner, perhaps, but not inappropriately so given Orfeo's legendary position in musical history as the first virtuoso. Most of the female voices sound immature by comparison with Rogers's reedy, fluent tenor; what makes them so good at replacing boy sopranos in choral works here militates against plausibility in this Italianate context. (The matter of nationality is always important: the French-oriented ensemble Les Arts Florissants, responsible for last year's absorbing version of Charpentier's *Medée*, doesn't make anything like a comparable effect in its new recording of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*; the line readings are flat and literal rather than spontaneous and vivid.) Still, most of Monteverdi's expressivity is securely articulated, and the dialogues have urgency and a real sense of exchange. John Whenham's new "Cambridge Opera Handbook" on *Orfeo* is a stimulating companion to this recording.

Between the fact that few major works are free of significant matters of textual contention and the fact that the pace of scholarly activity is continually turning up new (or reconsidering old) historical data and theories, it's not hard for every new recording to have some clearly definable novelty value. Since 1981, Bach's Mass in B minor has been the focal point of controversy over the appropriate numbers for the performance of his choral music. The radical, minimalist view was made audible in Joshua Rifkin's one-to-a-part recording (Nonesuch 79036-1, two LPs) of this

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work long entrusted to choral forces. While subscribing in principle to Rifkin's position, Andrew Parrott elects to follow a precedent suggesting occasional reinforcement of his five solo singers with another five, and his performance, more colorful and rhythmically vigorous than Rifkin's, makes a good case. Overall, the instrumental work is the most consistently convincing aspect of Parrott's performance; the obbligatos in the arias are played with virtuosity and phrased with elegance. Parrott's use of boy altos alongside female sopranos, however boyish the latter sound, doesn't yield a convincing blend (Bach used boys on both parts), and in solos the boys are tangibly less poised. The vocal side has a way to go before the potential of this small-forces approach is fully realized, though this recording confirms that the Mass loses nothing of richness and variety when performed this way. Connoisseurs of textual refinement will note that both conductors specify which pronunciation of Latin they observe: Parrott uses the German form observed in Leipzig, where Bach composed the work, while Rifkin prefers the Italian diction favored in the Dresden court chapel, for which the Kyrie and Gloria were originally intended.

Revival of defunct performance practices is not without secondary hazards: the features of an old instrumental technique most novel to modern players were probably second nature to the original players. When the result of self-conscious effort on the part of modern musicians, such features as the swelling of vibratoless string notes can become obtrusive—as they sometimes do in Parrott's recording. I'm happy to find, in John Eliot Gardiner's recording of Handel's *Solomon*, that the players appear to have internalized these features, instinctively using them as resources where appropriate but not waving them in our faces. This *Solomon* is among the most satisfactory Handel recordings ever. For years, admirers of this imperial pageant—a blend of pomp and pastoral and eroticism, with the mini-drama of the contested child at its center—have been torn between Sir Thomas Beecham's highhanded recension, which managed to preserve the spirit of Handel's score while outrageously falsifying the letter, and other, more literally faithful yet pallid realizations. Gardiner easily combines letter and spirit.

A concluding reflection on the autonomy of the "authentic performance" movement. After hearing the new *Orfeo*, I dug out the opera's first complete recording, made in Italy in 1939 with a cast of second-line opera singers, all well versed in the Puccini idiom. The Orfeo was a meaty baritone, the Messenger a plummy contralto; both poured on vibrant tone and inflected the recitatives with veristic rhetoric. Though ponderous, the result is not unmoving, and the way in which the singers matched their vibratos and phrasings is sometimes irresistible, if unhistorical. What struck me forcibly is that we no longer hear such voices in Puccini, let alone in Monteverdi. Were Italy to produce a new *Orfeo* recording cast with comparable figures, we would probably encounter the lean baritone of Leo Nucci, the light mezzo of Lucia Valentini Terrani. Evidently, a general shift in ideals of vocal sound has been in progress over the decades, even beyond the influence of scholarship. Similarly, the recent emphasis on instrumental timbre in early-music performance suggestively parallels the prominence of timbre as a compositional resource in music since the war. □

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I		A		A		I		E		N		C		E
M	A	R	I	T	A	L		S	E	A	L	A	N	E
L		A		Y		L		S		K		R		P
E	X	P	L	O	S	I	V	E	D	E	V	I	C	E
S		E		U		E		R		I		N		N
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S		B		A		U		A		E		E		A
E	R	R	O	R	O	F	J	U	D	G	M	E	N	T
P		I		T		F		C		R		S		I
T	A	D	P	O	L	E		E	V	A	S	I	O	N
I		G		U		R		R		S		D		G
C	R	E	A	T	E	S		S	I	S	T	E	R	S

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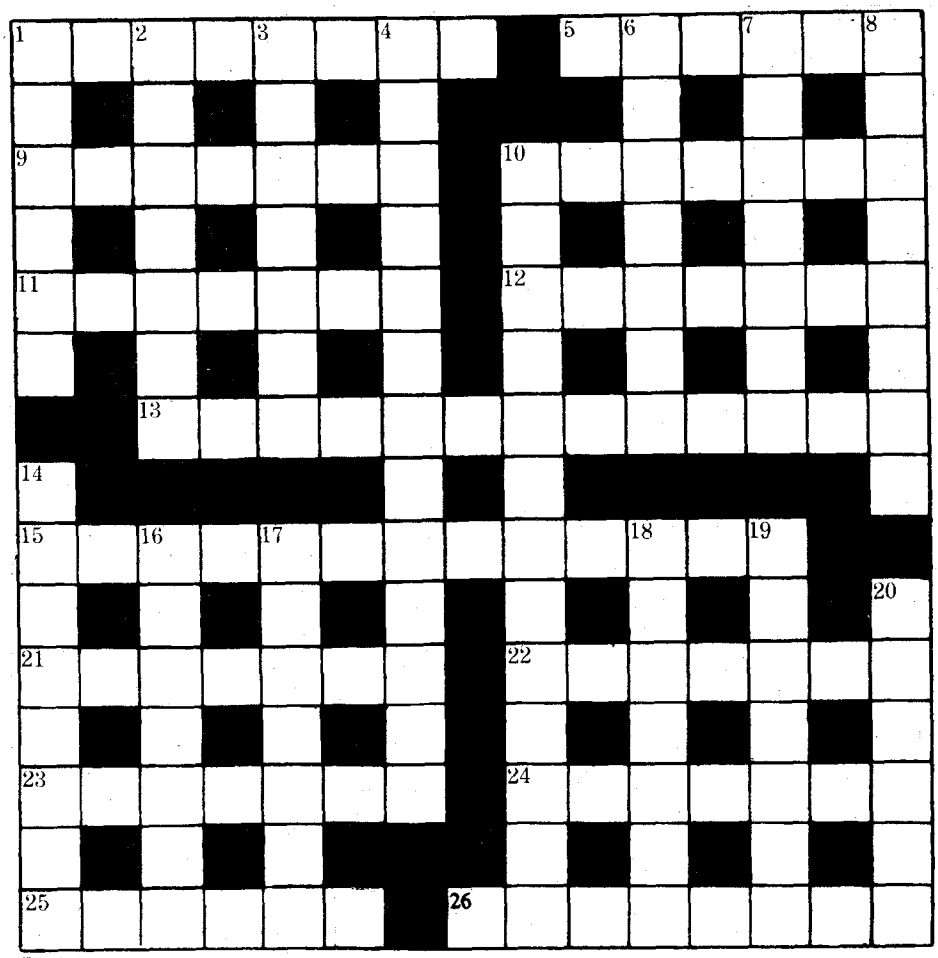
Crossword Puzzle No. 2112

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 If one crows about things, this is the last thing he should have—especially if driving! (8)
5 A plea for immediate victory—free from waste. (6)
9 Are a trifle peculiar with what one might prepare before shopping, being a practical person. (7)
10 The sort of rodent-catcher one proverbially might build for a helper, in a way. (7)
11 A welcome break for the rest, if Peter is disturbed by it. (7)
12 In the Caribbean, might letters from A. A. occur, when proven tipsy with drink? (7)
13 In the grape game, was Emerson's rude? (7,6)
15 Obviously a brainy child's plaything—if you think a little bit this way. (3,4,2,4)
21 An Indian from the general region of 12, or French animal. (7)
22 What some Madison Avenue types are concerned with—trailing vines out in back, in the old days. (7)
23 Such would be foliate, and idly turn the pages years afterward. (7)
24 Coming out of a box, I'd a tendency to change a compound in a certain way. (7)
25 In homeopathy, one doesn't necessarily use a home one. (6)
26 Baseball might, as the tempter might say. (2,1,5)

DOWN

1 This makes copper hard to find, but coming to the point, it might be dangerous. (6)
2 Serving as a standard for a number of pupils—a little less than a hundred . . . (7)
3 . . . which is what they might have to spend their money on. (7)
4 Rover's home here—where some are unhappy to be. (2,3,8)
6 One might be so mistaken by the way one in the field hates to be seen. (2,5)
7 A pound cake is frequently seen this way, and with some attention paid to it. (7)
8 At the end of the day you might find this what a ruffian might do to his victim. (4,4)
10 An unexpected event, but you can't say you won't take it lying down! So unfortunate! (8,5)
14 One who insists on exactness has a point, when it comes to something in the file to jog your memory. (8)
16 One of the English kings had such a limb, if you consider a certain standard of measurement, as the old sailor knew. (7)
17 A type of marine motor in bad—or worse—condition. (7)
18 They reputedly do not work in the capacity of tellers. (7)
19 It might signify that the players should get stirred up. (7)
20 With it, does one agree that the material arrived undamaged in transport like this? (6)

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